

THE GENESIS OF  
PEARL HARBOR

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PAMPHLETS IN PREPARATION  
Conscientious Objectors in Prison

THE GENESIS  
OF  
PEARL HARBOR

*John Hanks*

PACIFIST  
RESEARCH  
BUREAU



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THE  
GENESIS  
OF  
PEARL HARBOR

By  
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## DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

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In presenting this study to the public at this time, the Pacifist Research Bureau recognizes that it is still too early to tell the complete story of the negotiations which led up to the attack upon Pearl Harbor. The historical situation out of which these negotiations arose can not yet be adequately studied or analyzed. Not even the British archives, to say nothing of the Japanese, covering the diplomatic exchanges of this period concerning the Far East are as yet available to us. However, the State Department of the United States has published the documents covering the relations with Japan between 1931 and 1941, so that at least a part of the diplomatic story can be studied and appraised.

Peoples and governments must adopt attitudes and policies on matters of grave public concern whether or not they are in possession of all the facts upon which truly enlightened attitudes and policies might be based. It is our feeling that an analysis of the events which led up to Pearl Harbor, based only upon such information as we can glean from the published documents of the State Department and Ambassador Grew, is preferable to one based on hearsay alone. Except in the introductory section, the author has therefore avoided filling in the details from the newspaper conjectures of what may have taken place in certain diplomatic exchanges, and has confined himself entirely to the documents mentioned.

This study has been prepared by William Neumann, who before his induction into Civilian Public Service was completing the requirements for the Ph.D. degree in history at the University of Michigan. The Bureau wishes to acknowledge with grateful thanks the valuable criticisms of the original manuscript made by Professor Kenneth Scott Latourette of Yale University, Professor Payson J. Treat of Stanford University, and Professor Frank Williston of the University of Washington. The author, however, assumes full responsibility for any errors in fact which may inadvertently appear here, and for any opinions expressed.

HARROP A. FREEMAN,  
Executive Director

April, 1945.



## TABLE OF DATES

### 1931-1938

1931	Mukden Incident opens Japanese drive on Manchuria.
1932	Secretary Stimson announces United States policy of "Non-recognition."
1933	Japan announces withdrawal from League of Nations.
1934	Passage of Philippine Independence Act. Japan gives notice of withdrawal from naval limitation treaty.
1936	New naval conference fails to secure agreement on naval ratios. Anti-Comintern Pact signed by Japan and Germany.
1937	Renewal of war in China. President Roosevelt's "Quarantine Speech" and "Panay Incident." Italy enters Anti-Comintern Pact.
1938	"Moral Embargo" on airplane exports to Japan.

### —1939—

July	United States notifies Japan of abrogation of commercial treaty.
August	Germany and Soviet Russia sign Non-Aggression Pact.
September	World War II begins, following German invasion of Poland.

### —1940—

January	Expiration of commercial treaty between Japan and United States.
June	Fall of France, followed by German occupation.
July	Exports to Japan severely restricted. Aviation gasoline embargo.
September	United States enacts military conscription law. Tripartite Pact signed by Germany, Italy and Japan.
October	Further extension of United States export ban.
November	Appointment of Admiral Nomura as Japanese Ambassador to United States.
December	Further embargoes on exports to Japan.

### —1941—

January	Suggestions for improvement of American-Japanese relations made to State Department by private persons.
February	Ambassador Nomura arrives in Washington.

March 10	Passage of Lend-Lease Act.
April 9	Informal draft agreement presented by private individuals, including proposal for Pacific Conference.
April 13	Japan and Soviet Russia sign Five-Year Neutrality Pact, recognizing Japanese domination of Manchuria.
May 12-31	American-Japanese conversations on proposed agreement.
June 2	Ambassador Nomura accepts American draft "in substance."
June 21	New American draft proposal marks high point of conversations.
June 22	German invasion of Russia.
July 7	United States participates in occupation of Iceland.
July 23	Announcement that Japan will occupy French Indo-China.
July 24	Roosevelt's proposal to attempt neutralization of Indo-China.
July 25	American freezing order on Japanese assets.
August 8	Suggestion of Pacific Conference renewed.
August 10	Roosevelt and Churchill meet at Atlantic Conference.
August 27	Message from Konoye to Roosevelt urges Pacific meeting.
September 4	U. S. Destroyer <i>Greer</i> fights with German submarine.
September 29	Ambassador Grew urges Pacific Conference.
October 2	American reply unfavorable to Japanese proposals.
October 16	Fall of Konoye cabinet in Japan.
October 18	Formation of Tojo cabinet.
November 13	United States repeals Neutrality Act.
November 17	Kurusu arrives in Washington to assist in negotiations.
November 20	New Japanese draft proposal for Pacific agreement.
November 25	Hull tells Army and Navy no agreement likely and surprise attack may be expected.
November 26	Final United States proposal on Pacific agreement.
November 27	Nomura and Kurusu in final interview with President.
December 6	Roosevelt sends message to Japanese Emperor.
December 7	Pearl Harbor attack. Ambassadors hand reply to Hull. Japan declares war.
December 8	America declares war.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Background of Pacific Relations.....	1
The United States Enters the Pacific.....	1
Naval Rivalry and Immigration.....	4
Manchuria and After.....	6
II. Economic Measures Against Japan, 1938-1940.....	7
War in Europe.....	8
Embargoes .....	9
The Probability of War.....	11
III. Opening of Informal Conversations, January-June, 1941.....	13
The Draft Agreement of April 9th.....	14
The Japanese Proposal of May 12th.....	16
Counter Proposals of the State Department.....	17
IV. Obstacles to Agreement, June-July, 1941.....	20
The American Revision of June 21st.....	21
Increasing Tension .....	22
The Occupation of Southern Indo-China.....	24
V. Efforts for a Pacific Conference, August-October, 1941.....	27
American Reaction to the Suggestion for a Conference.....	30
Japan Attempts to Break the Impasse.....	31
Grew Supports the Conference Proposal.....	33
VI. Kuru's Unsuccessful Mission, November 5th to December 7th.....	36
Mr. Kuru in Washington.....	39
The Proposal of November 26th.....	41
War .....	45
VII. Conclusion .....	47

## THE GENESIS OF PEARL HARBOR

### I. BACKGROUND OF PACIFIC RELATIONS

When news of the Japanese attack swept across the United States on that eventful Pearl Harbor Sunday, it left behind it a surprised and shocked nation. To the majority of American citizens, this attack was a completely unprovoked "stab in the back." But to interested observers of Far Eastern affairs the war was both a long-developing and long-predicted event.

The strained Japanese-American relations of 1941 grew out of conflicts covering many decades. In part, the history of these relations is the story of American "Manifest Destiny" and of the consequent expansion of territorial possessions and national interests in the Pacific. In part, also, it is the story of the adoption of similar expansionist concepts by the militaristic elements of Japan, and of the struggle of these elements to dominate Japanese national policy.

Until the Japanese governmental archives are opened, and until a full account of American relations with Great Britain and other Pacific powers is available, many aspects of the development of the Pacific War must remain unexplained. However, a partial account of the later phases of Japanese-American diplomacy can now be found in the two volumes of documents released by the Department of State.<sup>1</sup> For the year 1941 the printed documents are complete enough to outline the general course of American Far Eastern diplomacy during the last ten months of peace. It was in this period—opening with Ambassador Grew's warning, on January 27, of a surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in the event of "trouble" with the United States, and closing with Secretary Hull's confiding the guardianship of national security to the hands of the Army and Navy on November 25 and 28<sup>2</sup>—that the issues of war and peace in the Pacific were finally determined.

#### The United States Enters the Pacific

The American roots of the Pacific War can be traced back at least to the year 1898. Prior to that date, America's interest in the Far East was limited chiefly to the maintenance of equal commercial op-

<sup>1</sup>*Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan: 1931-1941* (Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1943). Hereafter referred to as *For. Rel.*

<sup>2</sup>Grew to Hull, January 27, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II:133; "Summary of Conversations," memorandum prepared in the Department of State, May 19, 1942, *For. Rel.*, II:377-378.



portunity for its citizens in that area.<sup>3</sup> In marked contrast to the extortions which characterized the nineteenth century Asiatic policy of the European nations, the United States sought its ends through propitiation and with due respect for territorial integrity; and as a result maintained amicable relations with both China and Japan.

But in 1898 came the momentous change in American policy which has been called "The Great Aberration."<sup>4</sup> In August of that year the American flag went up over Hawaii, and three months later Spain signed a treaty which ceded the Philippines and Guam to the United States. In the course of the Spanish-American War, American forces also occupied Wake Island, and the United States was a full-fledged entrant into the imperialistic power politics of the Pacific.

Hawaii was acquired largely at the urging of American sugar interests, but the other territorial gains were the result of a broader current. Encouraged by the imperialist-minded writings of Admiral Mahan, a vigorous group of expansionists led by Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge had come to the fore in national politics. Imperial expansion offered a diversion of the domestic unrest which threatened the social order,<sup>5</sup> and the prospect of great profits in the exploitation of Far Eastern markets helped win the support of special interest groups in this program. British persuasiveness also rallied support to the new program since the British Foreign Office was anxious to frustrate German interest in the Philippines and to bring the growing weight of the United States into the balance of Far Eastern politics.<sup>6</sup> After a heated struggle, Senate approval of the treaty with Spain was won by a single vote margin over the requisite two-thirds majority.

<sup>3</sup>A. Whitney Griswold, *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938), 5-6.

The following summary of the course of American relations with the Far East is based largely upon Professor Griswold's work. Similar accounts of the principal events, with varying emphases, may be found in Charles P. Howland's *Survey of American Foreign Relations, 1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1930); Payson J. Treat's *The Far East: A Political and Diplomatic History* (New York: Harper, revised 1935); and relevant chapters in Samuel F. Bemis' *A Diplomatic History of the United States* (New York: Henry Holt, 1936).

<sup>4</sup>Bemis, 463.

<sup>5</sup>Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *A Basic History of the United States* (New York: The New Home Library, 1944), 339-341.

<sup>6</sup>John Hay, American Ambassador at London, telegraphed to Washington in July, 1898, when policy in regard to the Philippines was under consideration, "the British Government prefer to have us retain the Philippine Islands, or failing that, insist on option in case of future sale." Tyler Dennett, *John Hay: From Poetry to Politics* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1933), 191.

Once the flag was planted far out in the Pacific, new interests brought new involvements, and they in turn reshaped and expanded American diplomacy in that area. As early as 1907, Theodore Roosevelt realized the disadvantage of the Pacific expansion and said, "The Philippine Islands form our heel of Achilles. They are all that makes the present situation with Japan dangerous."<sup>7</sup> But as President he launched a naval program which was to put armed might behind the new ventures, and which was eventually to culminate in a naval race with Japan for the dominance of the Pacific.

The balance of power principle, dominant in European politics, has also characterized the diplomacy of the Far East.<sup>8</sup> Great Britain, developing a widely scattered empire from her island base, has endeavored to maintain a pivotal position from which movement could be made in any direction necessary to check a rival expansion. At the turn of the century British concessions and privileges in China were threatened by the increasing claims of France, Russia and Germany. To check this menace to its favored position Britain sought the support of these powers, and also that of the United States, for the Chinese *status quo*. Partly as a result of this British diplomacy, Secretary Hay issued the historic "Open Door Notes" of September, 1899, and of July, 1900.<sup>9</sup> In essence they declared American policy to be one of respect for the territorial integrity of China and of insistence upon equal commercial opportunities in that area. A similar policy was urged upon other powers, but their responses were disappointing. However, Secretary Hay's two notes did serve to define the basic objectives which continued to be sought by American diplomacy in succeeding decades. Each administration with its distinctive methods has worked to that end, but none has left office with the Open Door a reality.

Theodore Roosevelt utilized the "big stick" method in his attempt to play a major role in the Far East. Yet despite his mediation of the Russo-Japanese War and his organization of an impressive show of naval strength, he accomplished little more than did the previous administration. In 1902, Great Britain, in forming the Anglo-Japanese

<sup>7</sup>Henry Pringle, *Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Blue Ribbon, 1931), 408.

<sup>8</sup>For an examination of the balance of power theory and its relationship to world conflicts, see Edward V. Gulick, *The Balance of Power* (Philadelphia: The Pacifist Research Bureau, 1943).

<sup>9</sup>An interesting picture of the circumstances in which these notes were issued is drawn by Tyler Dennett in the work cited above, especially chapter XXIV. For a view of special economic forces at work, see Charles S. Campbell, Jr., "American Business Interests and the Open Door in China," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, I: 43-58 (November, 1941).



Alliance, had already defied the Hay policy by abandoning Korea to Japan in return for a guarantee of British interests in China.

Although President Taft and Secretary of State Knox placed reliance on economic rather than on military power and sought to inject enough American dollars into China to carry on their diplomatic program, investors were reluctant and this effort brought no appreciable growth in American political and economic power in China.

The First World War and the treaties which resulted brought about a great shift in power in the Far East. While the Western nations were absorbed in the European conflict, Japan took occasion to expand her influence in Asia and the Pacific. The famous "Twenty-one Demands" were presented to China in January, 1915. Although some were withdrawn or modified, the insecure Chinese Government accepted the rest under ultimatum and thus yielded large economic concessions. Through the influence of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and by a series of secret treaties, Japan inherited the German Pacific holdings north of the equator.<sup>10</sup> These changes in territory so strengthened the Japanese position that the balance of power was largely upset and replaced by a growing Japanese-American antagonism. Since Japan had secured the approval of the other powers for her imperialist ambitions, only the United States was left to make strong protests at the Peace Conference against this new disturbance of the *status quo*. But President Wilson's efforts, unsupported by other powers, to prevent Japanese acquisition of control over the Shantung Peninsula holdings and the German Pacific islands succeeded only in embittering our relations with Japan.

### Naval Rivalry and Immigration

The growing Japanese-American naval rivalry and the re-opening of the immigration question in the post-war years increased this antagonism. The problem of checking the influx of Japanese migration to the United States had been solved by the "Gentlemen's Agreement" negotiated by Theodore Roosevelt in 1907 and 1908. This voluntary regulation on the part of Japan had stopped the immigration to the western states without involving congressional legislation, and without a direct affront to Japan. The right of the United States to regulate immigration was never challenged by Japan, but there was resentment against being labeled an inferior

<sup>10</sup>By a secret treaty with Great Britain in February of 1917, Japan won support for these claims in return for Japanese support of British claims to the German holdings south of the equator. By subsequent treaties Japan secured the support of France and Russia when German Pacific holdings were divided at the Peace Conference.

people by discriminatory legislation against Orientals. Japanese sensitivity was increased by the handling of the racial issue at Versailles. With the help of President Wilson, the Japanese delegation had prepared an amendment to the League Covenant which banned discrimination on the basis of race or nationality. But when the amendment came to a vote even Wilson, reversing his position, joined with the British to defeat it.<sup>11</sup>

Cancellation of the "Gentlemen's Agreement" in 1924 further aggravated this issue. The post-war witch hunt in America against aliens and minority groups was marked on the West Coast by a new outburst of anti-Japanese agitation. Despite the seventeen years of successful operation of the informal agreement, and over the protests of the State Department, sectional interests pushed the Oriental Exclusion Act through Congress. Its effect on our relations with Japan was severe, the question of immigration remaining a strong irritant between the two countries down to the outbreak of the present war.<sup>12</sup>

The naval expansion program of the major powers in the field of capital ships had been limited by the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922. The Washington Conference was the result of both American and British desires to end the threat of a naval race between them, and a mutual move to check the growing naval strength of Japan. It also served as a means by which Great Britain was led to discontinue the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which was becoming an embarrassing factor in Anglo-American relations. The treaty adopted by the Conference limited the strength in capital ships of Britain, the United States and Japan to a 5-5-3 ratio. But the naval treaty, along with the concurrent agreements in regard to China and limitations on fortifications, was largely a recognition of the *status quo* and an effort to freeze it at this point. Very little was done to meet the basic problems of the Pacific and to provide for peaceful readjustments.

The Washington Nine-Power Treaty, upholding China's territorial and administrative integrity and equal commercial opportunity for other nations (the Open Door), marked a degree of forced retreat by Japan from the favored position in Shantung and other areas in China obtained

<sup>11</sup>Charles Seymour, *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House* (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton, Mifflin, 1928), IV, 309-314, 413-415, 428.

<sup>12</sup>Some observers are inclined to discount the political effect of Japan's resentment of the discrimination practised by America and other Western countries. However, Nathaniel Pfeffer, who is in no sense an apologist for Japan, says, "To a great extent its recent aggressions are compensation for its own chagrin and satisfaction wrung from those who inflicted humiliation on it." *Prerequisites to Peace in the Far East* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), 69. See also William Henry Chamberlin, *Japan Over Asia* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1937) 156-157; Inazo Nitobe, *Japan: Some Phases of Her Problems and Development* (London: Ernest Benn, 1931), 167.



through the World War settlement and the Twenty-one Demands. These demands had not only roused much opposition in Britain and America but had stirred the Chinese people to resistance. Chinese delegates had made repeated efforts to secure revisions at the Paris Peace Conference, but it was not until five years later that the Washington Conference provided a setting favorable to effective diplomatic pressures by the Western powers.

#### Manchuria and After

Japan's leaders in the twenties looked increasingly to industrialization as a solution to the population problem, and to the markets and resources of China as aids to this economic program. In September, 1931, the militarist group, strong enough to select the means to these ends, began a drive for the military occupation of all of Manchuria. This move brought forth a series of strong notes from Secretary of State Stimson in which he sought the diplomatic backing of the major powers in checking the Japanese drive and in safeguarding the Open Door.<sup>13</sup> Not only was the Secretary discouraged in his efforts by the conservatism of the League of Nations, but he received little individual support from Great Britain or France.

In January, 1932, the State Department sent dual notes to Japan and China which set forth the American policy of "Non-recognition."<sup>14</sup> No recognition would be given to any treaty or agreement impairing the treaty rights of the United States or its citizens in China, nor would recognition be given to any situation or treaty which might be brought about by means contrary to the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war. In February, in response to a Japanese request, the United States proposed a basis for peace between China and Japan.<sup>15</sup> While China accepted the proposal, Japan refused to agree to a settlement which would deprive her of all advantages gained in the war, hence no action resulted.

In 1934 Japan announced her intention to terminate adherence to the naval agreement of 1922 on December 31, 1936. The London Conference of 1935-1936 failed to reach a new agreement when the United States and Great Britain refused to accept Japanese parity in all classes. At the same time the Japanese threat to American naval supremacy in the Pacific increased the fears and activities of those groups in the United States who viewed war with Japan as inevitable.

The concentration of the administration of Franklin Roosevelt in the early years upon domestic affairs somewhat eased the tension in relations with Japan. Although Secretary Hull adhered to the Far Eastern policy

<sup>13</sup>See *For. Rel.*, I: 9-66. <sup>14</sup>Text, *For. Rel.*, I: 76. <sup>15</sup>*For. Rel.*, I: 170, 173-178, 180-183.

of his predecessors, he did not pursue it with the contentious vigor of Secretary Stimson.

In March, 1934, the passage of the Philippine Independence Act was a step toward withdrawal from Pacific politics. By this legislation the Islands were to become completely independent in 1946. This cannot be cited as an effort on principle to undo the work of 1898; though an uneasy conscience in America may have helped, the immediate stimulus was pressure on Congress from business interests in competition with Philippine exports and from West Coast labor interests in opposition to the influx of Filipino immigrants.<sup>16</sup>

The renewal of the conflict between Japan and China in July, 1937, brought a calm endorsement of legitimate treaty rights by the United States,<sup>17</sup> but the State Department took no initiative to check the violations of these rights. The President's famous "Quarantine" speech in Chicago on October 5, 1937, showed a more aggressive temper,<sup>18</sup> yet so potentially dangerous an incident as the sinking of the United States gunboat *Panay* on December 12, 1937, was declared a closed incident by Secretary Hull within two weeks.<sup>19</sup> The *Panay*, along with three Socony Vacuum Company boats, was attacked by Japanese planes on the Yangtze River in China. Prompt apologies and payment of indemnities soon quieted the flurry of public opinion in the United States.

## II. ECONOMIC MEASURES AGAINST JAPAN

1938 - 1940

The year 1938 marked a major change in American policy with the inauguration of a series of economic measures which were to implement more forceful protests to Japan. There was a growing conviction in the State Department that Japan's aims in China were the same as those of the Nazi forces in Europe. Japanese action, particularly in Nanking and Canton, resulted in a long series of incidents involving American lives and property.<sup>20</sup> In July, 1938, the Department of State directed a letter to all manufacturers and exporters of airplanes or aeronautical equipment stat-

<sup>16</sup>Grayson Louis Kirk, *Philippine Independence: Motives, Problems, and Prospects* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1936), Chapter IV.

<sup>17</sup>See statement by the Secretary of State, issued as a press release, July 16, 1937, *For. Rel.*, I: 325-326. In a message to Ambassador Grew on September 2, 1937, the Secretary expressed disapproval of the actions of both combatants and a determination to avoid taking sides in the conflict. *For. Rel.*, I: 361-364.

<sup>18</sup>Text, Department of State *Press Releases*, XVII: 419 (October 9, 1937), 275-279.

<sup>19</sup>Official notes, etc., *For. Rel.*, I: 517-563; Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941), 232-242.

<sup>20</sup>For representative cases, see *For. Rel.*, I: 487-516, 564-641, 757-826.



ing that the Department would "with great regret" issue export licenses for shipping to those belligerents whose armed forces were using planes to attack civilian populations.<sup>21</sup> This was America's first shocked reaction to Japan's bombing of civilians, a practice which was destined to become a commonplace for all participants in the Second World War, including the United States.

In July, 1939, an action of much greater consequence was the notification to Japan of America's intention to abrogate the Commercial Treaty of 1911 at the end of six months.<sup>22</sup> Initiated by a proposal in the United States Senate, the treaty abrogation cleared the way for the economic warfare by which the United States would seek to coerce Japan into dropping its expansionist program in Asia.<sup>23</sup>

### War in Europe

When the war broke out in Europe in September, 1939, Japan sent a statement of its intentions to all the belligerents as well as to the United States.

Confronted by the recent outbreak of a European war, the Government of Japan plans to avoid becoming involved in that war and to devote its energies to settling the China incident.<sup>24</sup>

The belligerents were also given "friendly advice" to effect a voluntary withdrawal of their troops and naval forces from the areas in China under Japanese control. This advice was immediately construed as a Japanese effort to eliminate foreign settlements and Western influence from China.<sup>25</sup> Mr. Hull called the Japanese Ambassador into a long conference, in which he pointed out that the International Settlement at Shanghai had been built up by American, British and French subjects "long before Japan began to take an active interest in world commerce."<sup>26</sup> To the Secretary, Japan's aim was "not a mere innocent, friendly purpose," but had as its intention the exclusion of one set of nationals after another until Japan

<sup>21</sup>Text, *For. Rel.*, II: 201-202.

<sup>22</sup>Hull to Horinouchi, July 26, 1939, *For. Rel.*, II: 189.

<sup>23</sup>In October, 1939, on his return to Japan from a five-months' furlough in the United States, Ambassador Grew reported to his Embassy colleagues: "The denunciation of the Treaty of 1911 was almost universally approved and there is an almost universal demand for an embargo against Japan next winter. The present attitude of the administration is that we will not allow American interests to be crowded out of China. If Japan retaliates against an American embargo, there is every probability that our government will counter-retaliate in some form or other."

"I have pointed out that once started on a policy of sanctions we must see them through and that such a policy may conceivably lead to eventual war." *Ten Years in Japan*, 295.

<sup>24</sup>Dooman to Hull, September 5, 1939, *For. Rel.*, II: 9.

<sup>25</sup>Dooman to Hull, September 6, 1939, *For. Rel.*, II: 11.

<sup>26</sup>Memorandum by Hull, September 7, 1939, *For. Rel.*, II: 13.

had exclusive extraterritorial privileges in China. Mr. Hull also threw in a threat of an aroused American Congress and people taking further economic measures against Japan which the State Department would be powerless to prevent. At a later meeting with the Japanese Ambassador, he stated that the American Government had planned to remove its troops as soon as the Chinese authorities were able to preserve order, and "was virtually reaching the stage when this step would be deemed feasible at the precise time that Japan moved her military forces into China."<sup>27</sup>

In the early months of the European war, Ambassador Grew took an occasion to summarize Japanese-American relations of that date. Returning to Tokyo after several months in the United States, he addressed the America-Japan society on October 19, 1939.

American public opinion strongly resents some of the things that Japan's armed forces are doing in China today, including actions against American rights and legitimate interests in China. On that subject public opinion in the United States is unanimous. . . . The American Government and people understand what is meant by the "new order in East Asia" precisely as clearly as it is understood in Japan. The "new order in East Asia" has been officially defined in Japan as an order of security, stability and progress. The American Government and people earnestly desire security, stability and progress not only for themselves but for all other nations in every quarter of the world. But the new order in East Asia has appeared to include, among other things, depriving Americans of their long established rights in China, and to this the American people are opposed.<sup>28</sup>

### Embargoes

To support this opposition to the Asiatic new order, American economic measures continued. Aluminum and molybdenum were added to the suggested embargo list in December, 1939, and the same month a ban was placed on the delivery to "certain countries" (i. e., those "engaged in unprovoked bombing or machine gunning of civilian populations from the air") of manufacturing rights or technical information required for the production of aviation gasoline.<sup>29</sup> In January, 1940, when the commercial treaty expired, trade with Japan was placed upon a day-to-day basis. The following July the export licensing system was applied to a wide variety of strategic materials including high grade iron and steel scrap, and the export of aviation gasoline was

<sup>27</sup>Memorandum by Hull, September 15, 1939, *For. Rel.*, II: 17.

<sup>28</sup>Text, *For. Rel.*, II: 24-27.

<sup>29</sup>Press Releases, *For. Rel.*, II: 202-204. The Japanese Government officially objected to the application of this order to Japan, denying the charge of attacks on civilian populations. *For. Rel.*, II: 205.



limited to the Western Hemisphere. In October the export ban was extended to all grades of scrap metal, export licenses being issued only for shipments to the Western Hemisphere and Great Britain, and through the winter of 1940-41 the embargo on strategic materials was widely extended. Late in May the export restrictions were extended to United States territories.<sup>30</sup>

British policy clashed temporarily with that of the United States in the summer of 1940 when Great Britain closed the Burma Road, the overland route by which China was receiving war materials. Although Secretary Hull maintained that such action would constitute "unwarranted interpositions of obstacles to world trade," and insisted on our legitimate interest in keeping commercial arteries open, the road was closed for a three-months period.<sup>31</sup> Seven months later, Japan was told that a threat to British trade routes would mean war with the United States.<sup>32</sup> This remarkable statement was made in an interview between the Counselor of the American Embassy at Tokyo, Eugene Dooman, and Mr. Ohashi, the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Dooman's statements were later concurred in by Ambassador Grew.<sup>33</sup> Mr. Dooman said that:

It would be absurd to suppose that the American people, while pouring munitions into Britain, would look with complacency upon the cutting of communications between Britain and British dominions and colonies overseas. If, therefore, Japan or any other nation were to prejudice the safety of those communications, either by direct action or by placing herself in a position to menace those communications, she would have to expect to come into conflict with the United States.<sup>34</sup>

The Counselor also alluded to Japanese interest in the Dutch East Indies as an alternative source of petroleum and other essential products, as well as a strategic position for threatening the British lines of communication, and said that for this reason the United States was reluctant to impose embargoes against Japan and had shown "forbearance."

From these statements it seems probable that American commitments to Great Britain were far-reaching even before the passage of the Lend-Lease Act in March of 1941. Britain was later to reciprocate by bringing its domination of the seas as well as the cooperation of the Netherlands Indies to the support of the American war of economic attrition to make it highly effective in its later stages.

<sup>30</sup>Official proclamations, press releases, etc., *For. Rel.*, II: 193-198, 211-218, 222-223, 232-263.

<sup>31</sup>Press Release by Department of State, July 16, 1940, *For. Rel.*, II: 101.

<sup>32</sup>Memorandum by Dooman, February 14, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 139.

<sup>33</sup>Grew to Hull, February 27, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 143.

<sup>34</sup>Memorandum by Dooman, February 14, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 139.

Japanese-American relations were also strained by Japan's Axis affiliations. As American participation in the European war became more extensive, it was to Germany's interest to have a diverting threat from Japan against the United States West Coast and Pacific supply lines. Japan, on her part, faced by the Anglo-American entente, looked increasingly to Germany as an ally in world politics. As early as November, 1936, Japan and Germany had drawn close together in signing the Anti-Comintern Pact in which they agreed to consult and collaborate in preventive measures against the Communist International.<sup>35</sup> The Soviet Ambassador to Tokyo, who thought that the Pact was directed primarily against England rather than Russia, charged that it included secret military clauses.<sup>36</sup> On September 27, 1940, Germany and Japan joined with Italy in a three-power pact in which the signatories pledged to "assist one another with all political, economic and military means when one of the three Contracting Parties is attacked by a power at present not involved in the European War or in the Sino-Japanese conflict."<sup>37</sup> This alliance was most advantageous to Germany in that it aimed at neutralizing the United States as well as Russia, and was a threat to American step-by-step intervention in the European war. In November, 1941, Ambassador Nomura admitted that Japan was getting nothing out of the Pact except American resentment.<sup>38</sup> Yet the existence of this alliance was a major factor in the failure of the 1941 negotiations with Japan.

American military and financial aid in support of Chiang Kai-shek's fight against Japan increased in 1940, and in November included a \$50,000,000 loan.<sup>39</sup> Japan, resentful of this action, claimed that outside aid alone sustained the Chungking regime and thus imposed the sole obstacle to an early peace.<sup>40</sup>

### The Probability of War

At the close of 1940, Ambassador Grew was exceedingly pessimistic about the Pacific situation. On December 14, he wrote to the President as follows:

About Japan and all her works. It seems to me to be increasingly clear that we are bound to have a showdown someday, and the

<sup>35</sup>Text, Dickover to Hull, November 26, 1936, *For. Rel.*, II: 153-154. Italy joined in the Anti-Comintern Pact November 6, 1937. *For. Rel.*, II: 159-160.

<sup>36</sup>Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, 191.

<sup>37</sup>Summary of text, Grew to Hull, *For. Rel.*, II: 165-166.

<sup>38</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, November 19, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 752.

<sup>39</sup>State Department Memorandum, May 19, 1942, *For. Rel.*, II: 326.

<sup>40</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, May 28, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 443.



principal question at issue is whether it is to our advantage to have that showdown sooner or to have it later.<sup>41</sup>

He then considered the relationship between our "getting into war with Japan" and our support to Britain in her campaign against Germany, along with the question of timing in relation to the comparative strength of the American and Japanese navies. These apparently were the primary criteria of when the war with Japan should open. He said further:

It therefore appears that sooner or later, unless we are prepared, with General Hugh Johnson, to withdraw bag and baggage from the entire sphere of "Greater East Asia including the South Seas" (which God forbid), we are bound eventually to come to a head-on clash with Japan.<sup>42</sup>

He felt that the American people were "in a mood for vigorous action" and advocated a "progressively firm policy" backed up by the intention to go to war if necessary. There was some chance, he thought, that such a policy would serve to discredit Japan's current leaders and so, without actual war, bring about "a readjustment of the whole Pacific problem." To this personal letter the President answered in late January, "I find myself in decided agreement with your conclusions."<sup>43</sup>

Speaking of the relation of Pacific policy to the efforts of the British in the European war, the President said:

Their defense strategy must in the nature of things be global. Our strategy of giving them assistance toward ensuring our own security must envisage both sending of supplies to England and helping to prevent a closing of channels of communication to and from various parts of the world, so that other important sources of supply will not be denied to the British and added to the assets of the other side.

... The conflict may well be long and we must bear in mind that when England is victorious she may not have left the strength that would be needed to bring about a rearrangement of such territorial changes in the western and southern Pacific as might occur during the course of the conflict if Japan is not kept within bounds.<sup>44</sup>

This correspondence in 1940, showing frank expectation of war, gives some support to the Japanese charge that there was a lack of sincerity on the part of America in the Washington conversations of 1941—that they were aimed not at the discovery of a solution but at postponement of war until the administration was better prepared for its outbreak. Americans, on their part, entertained similar suspicions of the Japanese.

<sup>41</sup>Ten Years in Japan, 359. <sup>42</sup>Ten Years in Japan, 360. <sup>43</sup>Ten Years in Japan, 361. <sup>44</sup>Ten Years in Japan, 362-363.

### III. OPENING OF INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS JANUARY - JUNE, 1941

The year 1941 opened with both ominous and optimistic notes. On January 27, Ambassador Grew wrote in his journal, "There is a lot of talk around town to the effect that the Japanese, in case of a break with the United States, are planning to go all out in a surprise mass attack on Pearl Harbor."<sup>45</sup> But along with this news, there came to the State Department information to the effect that the Japanese Government would "... welcome an opportunity to alter its political alignments and modify its attitude toward China."<sup>46</sup> The majority of Japanese people were represented as being weary of hostilities and interested in the recasting of Japan's policies along peaceful lines. The non-official Americans and Japanese who brought this news to the attention of the State Department carried further statements to the effect that the security gained through agreement with the United States would enable the moderate elements in Japan to gain control over the domestic political situation.<sup>47</sup>

Another event indicating the change in Japanese policy was the arrival of a new Ambassador in Washington, Admiral Nomura, whose appointment, several months after the recall of his predecessor, had been strongly opposed by German influence in Tokyo.<sup>48</sup> In his first interview with the President, the Ambassador referred to the chauvinistic military group as being the chief obstacle to a moderate policy.<sup>49</sup> But he also pointed out, shortly after, that the people in Japan with few exceptions were very much averse to getting into war with the United States; and that he did not believe there would be any further military movements, "unless the policy of increasing embargoes by this country should force his Government, in the minds of those in control, to take further military steps."<sup>50</sup>

As early as December, 1939, Ambassador Grew in Tokyo had written a similar critical opinion on the policy of economic warfare.

<sup>45</sup>Ten Years in Japan, 368.

<sup>46</sup>State Department Memorandum, May 19, 1942, *For. Rel.*, II: 328-329.

<sup>47</sup>The identity of these private individuals was not revealed, but there is evidence that throughout most of the year persons of good will were endeavoring to bring about understanding and a peaceful settlement. Frederick Moore, in *With Japan's Leaders* (New York: Scribner's, 1942), pages 207 and 283, mentions two such individuals, one a Japanese, the other an American. Dr. E. Stanley Jones and Dr. O. G. Robinson, American Christian leaders, labored over a period of months to find a solution. Dr. Jones refers briefly to this experience in the introduction to his *The Christ of the American Road* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1944).

<sup>48</sup>Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, 365.

<sup>49</sup>Memorandum by Hull, February 14, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 388-389.

<sup>50</sup>Memorandum by Hull, March 8, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 392.



Statisticians have proved to their own satisfaction, and will continue so to prove, that Japan can be defeated by economic pressure from without. But the statisticians generally fail to include psychological factors in their estimates. Japan is a nation of hardy warriors, still inculcated with the samurai do-or-die spirit which has by tradition and inheritance become ingrained in the race.<sup>51</sup>

The Ambassador went on to point out that sanctions presuppose the use of force, and "carried through to the end may lead to war." And he added that the use of force "except in defense of a nation's sovereignty, can only constitute an admission of a lack, first of good will and, second, of resourceful, imaginative, constructive statesmanship."<sup>52</sup>

#### The Draft Agreement of April 9

On April 9, 1941, an informal draft, outlining the basis of an *entente cordiale* between the two nations, was presented to the State Department by private Japanese and American individuals. It provided that the United States would request the Chiang Kai-shek regime to negotiate a peace with Japan which would be based on an independent China, withdrawal of Japanese troops, no indemnities nor territorial changes, recognition of Manchukuo and coalescence of the Wang Ching-wei Government (already recognized by Japan) with that of Chiang Kai-shek. There would be "no large-scale or concentrated immigration of Japanese into Chinese territory." The Open Door was to be resumed and based on a joint Japanese-American interpretation. A rejection of President Roosevelt's peace request to the Chinese would be followed by discontinuance of American aid to the Chiang Kai-shek Government.<sup>53</sup>

One section of the proposed agreement outlined attitudes of both Governments toward the European war. Japan was to state that the purpose of its Axis Alliance was defensive and "designed to prevent the extension of military grouping among nations not directly affected by the European War." Japan's obligations would come into force "only when one of the parties . . . is aggressively attacked" by a power not presently involved in the European war. The United States in turn would pledge its hate of war and non-commitment to any "aggressive alliance" aimed to assist one nation against another. The American attitude was to be determined solely and exclusively by considerations of "protective defense."

<sup>51</sup>Ten Years in Japan, 301-302. <sup>52</sup>Text, For. Rel., II: 398-402.

<sup>53</sup>Ten Years in Japan, 304.

Both Japan and the United States were to guarantee the independence of the Philippines and the United States was to give friendly diplomatic assistance in the removal of Hongkong and Singapore "as doorways to further political encroachment by the British in the Far East."

A Honolulu conference, led by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Konoye, was suggested for May, at which time further details would be worked out. Thus the idea of an executive meeting in the Pacific preceded the Atlantic Conference by four months, and Japanese restatement of this proposal in later months was an important aspect of the effort for a successful settlement of the Pacific conflicts.

The reaction of the Secretary of State to the effort to open negotiations was one of caution and disbelief that the time was opportune for action.<sup>54</sup> Although the private draft had been prepared in collaboration with Ambassador Nomura, and while the Ambassador was disposed to present it as a basis for negotiations, Mr. Hull thought that circumstances discouraged the immediate presentation of the document in an official way.<sup>55</sup>

On April 16, Secretary Hull gave more favorable consideration to the April 9 draft, and admitted that it contained various points on which the United States could agree, while other points required modification, elimination or supplement. Hull said that the paramount preliminary was " . . . a definite assurance in advance that the Japanese Government has the willingness and ability to go forward with a plan along the lines of the document we have referred to . . . ." Four principles were laid down as basic to discussion:

1. Respect for the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of each and all nations.
2. Support of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.
3. Support of the principle of equality, including equality of commercial opportunity.
4. Non-disturbance of the *status quo* in the Pacific except as the *status quo* may be altered by peaceful means.<sup>56</sup>

When Nomura suggested discussion of the principle of equality, the Secretary flatly said that this would be impossible and that no negotiations could begin if the Japanese should even hesitate to agree on this point. But when the application of equality to immigration was questioned, Hull said that in the United States this was more of a

<sup>54</sup>State Department Memorandum, May 19, 1942, For. Rel., II: 330-331.

<sup>55</sup>Memorandum by Hull, April 14, 1941, For. Rel., II: 402-406.

<sup>56</sup>Memorandum by Hull, April 16, 1941, For. Rel., II: 407.



domestic question, and that our good faith would have to be accepted in the efforts to secure California's consent to any reciprocal agreements.<sup>57</sup>

These four principles Secretary Hull maintained with some consistency until Pearl Harbor, but Ambassador Grew, in September, expressed strong disagreement with this kind of approach to Japan. The Ambassador felt that insistence on clear-cut commitment to principles would cause the conversations to "drag along indefinitely and unproductively" until the Konoye cabinet was discredited and a "revulsion of anti-American feeling" followed.<sup>58</sup> Since this was eventually the actual course of the negotiations, and since the Konoye cabinet ultimately was obliged to resign, there was some wisdom in Ambassador Grew's observations.

#### The Japanese Proposal of May 12

On May 12, an official revision of the April 9 draft was presented to the Secretary. In subsequent discussions the Ambassador said that the proposal was approved by the Army and Navy as well as by the entire Japanese Cabinet.<sup>59</sup> The principal changes made by Japan were in two sections. The first was in the wording of the provision which defined the relations of both nations to the European war. Japan again stated that the Axis Alliance was defensive and designed to prevent further spread of the European conflict. The American attitude was again to be determined by considerations of protective defense, but instead of the United States pledging no "aggressive alliance aimed to assist any one nation against another," the words "aggressive measures" were substituted. Obviously this was aimed at covering the broader aspects of American aid to Britain.

The second change concerned the Chinese-Japanese peace terms. The United States was to acknowledge the three principles of the "Konoe Statement":

1. Neighborly friendship;
2. Joint defense against communism;
3. Economic cooperation—by which Japan does not intend to exercise economic monopoly in China nor to demand of China a limitation in the interests of Third Powers.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 409.

<sup>58</sup>Grew to Hull, September 29, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 648-649.

<sup>59</sup>Text, Nomura to Hull, *For. Rel.*, II: 420-422; Memorandum by Hull, May 20, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 434.

<sup>60</sup>Oral Explanation for Proposed Amendments, *For. Rel.*, II: 423. The Japanese Prime Minister's name is transliterated as "Konoye" in some documents and as "Konoe" in others.

These principles and their implications were presented in an "Oral Explanation" and were in greater part the same as those of the April 9 draft. However there was no specific mention of the Open Door; and the request in the first draft for American assistance in removing Hongkong and Singapore as doorways to British influence was diplomatically dropped.

The guarantee of Philippine Independence was repeated from the April 9 draft, but it was made conditional on the maintenance of permanent neutrality for the Islands, and included a pledge of non-discrimination against Japanese subjects. The stipulation of the executive conference was deleted and it was suggested that this could better be arranged by an exchange of letters. The other revisions in the draft were of minor importance.

#### Counter Proposals of the State Department

On May 16, the State Department countered with major revisions of two sections in the Japanese proposal, while still emphasizing that the discussion was informal and unofficial. Section III, dealing with the Japanese-Chinese peace terms, was rewritten so as to include the specific terms in the body of the draft rather than in the Oral Explanation. In this form, it was pointed out, the President could make them known in confidence to Chiang Kai-shek and improve the prospect of the proposal's acceptance.<sup>61</sup> This change was agreeable to Mr. Nomura.<sup>62</sup>

The revision omitted the American pledge to discontinue assistance to China if the peace proposal were rejected. Mention of the "Konoe principles" as such was also omitted. "Joint defense against communism" was rephrased to read, "Parallel measures of defense against subversive activities from external sources," thus avoiding the word "communism." The question of the recognition of Manchukuo was left to be dealt with in friendly negotiations between the two countries. When Nomura questioned these latter two changes, Hull said that if the rest of the draft was satisfactory, he did not believe there would be difficulty over these two points.<sup>63</sup>

A more important revision dealt with the changes in Section II on the European war attitudes. The statement of the Japanese attitude toward the war was virtually that of the original April 9 draft. United States policy was again to be determined by con-

<sup>61</sup>Hull to Nomura, May 16, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 428-434.

<sup>62</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, May 21, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 438.

<sup>63</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, May 16, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 428.



siderations of protection and self-defense. But the concept of self-defense was explained in an annex composed of excerpts from a public speech made by Mr. Hull in the previous month.<sup>64</sup> In this speech he had stated the thesis that the Axis was committed to world conquest and that the security of the United States consequently called for "resistance wherever resistance will be most effective." In practice, said Hull, this means a policy of unhesitating aid to Great Britain and a guarantee that this aid would reach its destination in the shortest time and in maximum quantity. This was the American concept of self-defense and Japan was invited to state in this new draft that its Axis commitments were not inconsistent with this American concept.

In effect, the Japanese acceptance of this draft would have given advance approval to United States intervention in the European war whenever and wherever it was found most expedient, accepting such action as "self-defense." Nomura came directly to the point and asked if this interpretation of self-defense meant United States entry into the war without territorial attack. The Secretary answered indirectly by restating the "all-out-aid" policy in respect to Britain which called for appropriate measures when necessary.<sup>65</sup>

On May 20, Secretary Hull reopened the question of the "Joint defense against communism" article in the proposed treaty with China.<sup>66</sup> The Department feared that critics would take this clause as a joker in the treaty and as a cloak for continued Japanese troop occupation of China. The Japanese advisors pointed out the importance of this slogan as a cardinal objective in the war with China, and stated that it "had been impressed upon the Japanese public as an essential requisite for some years past." And since Chiang Kai-shek was alive to the dangers of communism, the Japanese did not feel that there would be any objection to a program of collaboration at this point. But the Secretary suggested that this clause as well as continued troop occupation be covered under some broader provision, or that liberties be taken with the translation to transmute "communism" into "inimical foreign ideologies."<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup>Extracts from Address by the Secretary of State on April 24, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 430-432.

<sup>65</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, May 16, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 427.

<sup>66</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, May 21, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 434-437.

<sup>67</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 436.

After seven days of little action, Secretary Hull, upon receipt of reports that Foreign Minister Matsuoka had been making public declarations of Japan's obligations to support Germany in the event of American entry into the war, again raised the question of Japan's Axis obligations. The Secretary made it clear that there could be little progress in the negotiations until Japan gave assurance of its position "... in the event that the United States should be drawn into the European war through action in the line of self-defense," which was to include "... maintaining the freedom of the seas against Hitler as an essential measure."<sup>68</sup> The Ambassador, in turn, said that Mr. Matsuoka was given to talking a great deal for domestic consumption. "Once the proposed agreement was concluded it would have a profound effect upon Japanese psychology which would cause a weakening in the influence of the jingoes."<sup>69</sup> Nomura said that Japan would make its own independent decision as to its Axis obligations and would not be dictated to by Germany or Italy. In view of the difficulties involved in more specific statements, the Ambassador did not think anything further could be added. But he did point out that the American embargoes had made the Japanese feel that there was no alternative at present to seeking to create an economic bloc, since they were feeling the pinch of a restricted economy. Hull at this time spoke of discussing the matter informally with the Chinese Government before entering upon any negotiations.<sup>70</sup>

A new American draft proposal was presented on May 31.<sup>71</sup> One key sentence was inserted in the controversial section on European war attitudes: "Obviously, the provisions of the Pact do not apply to involvement through acts of self-defense."<sup>72</sup> Again the Hull speech excerpts were included in the annex to certify that military action on the part of the United States would be understood not as an aggressive "attack," but as a defensive measure.

The "Joint defense against communism" clause now became "Cooperative defense against injurious communistic activities." This cooperation was tentatively to include the stationing of Japanese troops in China, subject to further discussion. Again the

<sup>68</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, May 28, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 440.

<sup>69</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 441.

<sup>70</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 442-443.

<sup>71</sup>Draft proposal, "Unofficial, Exploratory and Without Commitment," May 31, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 446-454.

<sup>72</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 447.



United States gave no pledge to discontinue aid to the Chiang Kai-shek regime in the event that the peace proposals were rejected by that government.

#### IV. OBSTACLES TO AGREEMENT

JUNE - JULY, 1941

It is worthy of note that Secretary Hull, according to the memorandum of May 28, was impressed by Admiral Nomura's apparent sincerity.<sup>73</sup> Clearly this referred to the Ambassador personally rather than to his Government, for the conversations after this date show increasing distrust of each country by the other.

After a two-day study of the American draft of May 31, the Ambassador reported to the Secretary that he and his associates were in agreement with the document, except for some changes in phraseology. Hull was extremely distrustful. "I then very slowly and deliberately asked the Ambassador whether it was his considered judgment that his Government seriously and earnestly desired to enter into a settlement for peace and non-discriminatory commercial relations and friendship generally in the Pacific area."<sup>74</sup> Ambassador Nomura gave an affirmative answer, but little further was said.

On June 4, a conference was held between the counselors of the State Department and those of the Japanese Embassy to iron out differences over the May 31 draft. Japanese opposition was strong against the inclusion of the sentence beginning with "Obviously" in Section II on the European war. (See above) Mr. Wakasugi said that Japan did not want to be bound by American interpretations of self-defense and must be left free to make its own decisions.<sup>75</sup> And, he said, Japan had no intention of repudiating these obligations. This lengthy conference settled some minor points, but it did not succeed in finding broad enough phraseology to secure agreement on the major differences.

Two days later, Colonel Iwakuro, also of the Japanese Embassy, intimated to one of Mr. Hull's associates that Wakasugi's strong statements may have been prejudicial rather than helpful, and that previously both parties had come much closer to agreement than they were at present.<sup>76</sup> The State Department showed

<sup>73</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, May 28, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 441.

<sup>74</sup>Memorandum by Hull, June 2, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 454.

<sup>75</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, June 4, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 456-457.

<sup>76</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, June 6, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 467.

that it agreed on this point when it presented a statement to Ambassador Nomura which charged that the suggested Japanese revisions had narrowed down Japan's advance toward a liberal position.<sup>77</sup> The negotiations were now halted for some days.

A Japanese draft of June 8 is referred to in later documents, but not printed. On June 15, Japan presented a new draft, but it did not go further in meeting American desires on the crucial issue of Axis relations. The statement of American attitude toward the European war followed closely that of our May 16 draft, but it omitted the annexed Hull explanation of self-defense.<sup>78</sup> In the conversations in regard to this draft, the Japanese stated that the American attitude had previously left them with no course other than the signing of the Tripartite Pact, and that now this alliance could not be repudiated until improvement in American relations had been achieved. Once this good feeling had been restored, other differences could be satisfactorily ironed out.<sup>79</sup>

#### The American Revision of June 21

A complete revision of the American draft was presented to Ambassador Nomura on June 21.<sup>80</sup> It was accompanied by an "Oral Statement" from the Secretary in which he pointed out that certain Japanese leaders were committed to the support of Germany, and that as long as these men held official positions, it was illusory to expect substantial results from an agreement between the two countries.<sup>81</sup>

Section II of this new draft was an almost complete reproduction of the last Japanese draft, and seemingly a considerable concession. But the qualifications were to be made in an exchange of letters between Hull and Nomura in which the Secretary was to define self-defense in terms of his speech and Nomura to state that Japanese obligations did not conflict with this dynamic defense policy. Thus the meaning of Section II could be concealed in the letters and the desired American concessions achieved indirectly.

A similar device was used in regard to the Chinese peace terms by which "economic cooperation" was to be defined in an

<sup>77</sup>Hull, Unofficial Oral Statement, June 6, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 467-468.

<sup>78</sup>Text, *For. Rel.*, II: 473-476.

<sup>79</sup>Memorandum by Schmidt, June 17, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 479.

<sup>80</sup>Draft proposal, June 21, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 486-492.

<sup>81</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 485. The term "oral statement" applies to a relatively informal type of diplomatic exchange which, though finally presented in writing, is usually first read aloud or summarized in conversation.



to cause a change in the Japanese cabinet.<sup>91</sup> This alleged meddling caused some Japanese resentment. However, the Konoye cabinet did resign on July 16 and when it was re-formed two days later, the chauvinistic Foreign Minister Matsuoka, the Secretary's chief irritation, was replaced by Admiral Toyoda.<sup>92</sup> Ambassador Nomura felt that this change in cabinets would lead to an improvement in relations, and he personally thought that he had a greater measure of Toyoda's confidence than of Matsuoka's.<sup>93</sup>

### The Occupation of Southern Indo-China

For some reason, probably because of the impending Japanese move in Indo-China, and possibly because of advance news of the American freezing order, the Japanese Ambassador was quite perturbed on July 21. Unable to see Secretary Hull because of the latter's ill health, Nomura called on Admiral Stark, Chief of Naval Operations. Not finding him in, he called on Rear Admiral Turner, Director of the War Plans Division of the Navy Department. In his conference with Admiral Turner, Nomura dropped the diplomatic language and spoke as naval officer to naval officer, so that Turner's report is unique in some respects.

Ambassador Nomura stated that for some weeks he had had frequent conferences with Mr. Hull, in an endeavor to seek a formula through which the United States and Japan could remain at peace. He no longer hoped for 100% agreement on all points, but would be content if a partial agreement could be reached which would prevent war between the two countries. Such an agreement would necessarily be informal, since Japan is now committed by treaty to Germany, and this treaty could not be denounced at this time. However, he noted that the decision as to when the military clauses of the treaty would come into effect lies entirely in Japan's hands, and that these would be invoked only if Germany were to be the object of aggression by another power. He stated that Japan entered the Axis solely because it seemed to be to Japan's interest to do so. Japan's future acts will be dominated solely by Japan, and not by any other power. Whatever military action Japan takes will be for her own ultimate purposes.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>91</sup>Memorandum by Hamilton, July 16, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 511.

<sup>92</sup>The shift was attributed by Ambassador Grew and by the Japanese Foreign Office to Germany's attack on Russia (of which Japan apparently had not been warned) and to disagreement between Matsuoka and the Prime Minister on interpretation of the Triple Alliance. Memorandum by Dooman, September 18, 1940, *For. Rel.*, II: 628-629.

<sup>93</sup>Rear Admiral Turner to Admiral Stark, July 21, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 517.

<sup>94</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 517.

The Ambassador also mentioned that as a result of United States export restrictions, Japan's economic position was bad and steadily getting worse. American military support to China, in contrast, was steadily increasing along with that of Great Britain. Nomura then informed Admiral Turner that within the next few days Japan expected to occupy French Indo-China. The Ambassador, who was personally opposed to this move, feared that the United States would take further military or economic action in reprisal. He suggested that, if the United States could change its policy in regard to the Japanese embargo and aid to China, as well as agree to Japanese troop occupation of the Inner Mongolian border, whatever action was taken by the United States in the Atlantic would not be a matter of great concern to Japan. This was the Japanese proposal in its plainest form, and Admiral Turner also inferred that it would mean Japanese troop withdrawal from the greater part of China.<sup>95</sup>

On July 23, the agreement with the Vichy government for the occupation of bases in southern French Indo-China was communicated informally to Sumner Welles as acting Secretary of State. In defense of this new move, Mr. Nomura stressed the severity of the food situation in Japan.<sup>96</sup> Britain had embargoed the export of rice from Burma<sup>97</sup> while lack of fertilizer from Germany had cut down Japan's domestic production. As a result Japan was forced to import a million tons of rice yearly from Indo-China and considered it necessary to assure itself of an uninterrupted source of supply from that area. The Ambassador also attributed this move to procrastination in the negotiations. Acting Secretary Welles presented the view of Secretary Hull that he could no longer see any basis offered for further negotiations, though he reported that the Ambassador seemed sincerely concerned and extremely conciliatory. Nomura expressed a hope that no hasty conclusions would be reached and his own "belief that a friendly adjustment could still be found."

President Roosevelt made an impromptu proposal on July 24, to secure Japanese withdrawal from Indo-China. In return for troop evacuation, the President would make every effort to secure agreement from the British, Dutch and Chinese for the

<sup>95</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 518.

<sup>96</sup>Memorandum by Welles, July 23, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 523-526. Chinese News Service reported that Japan produced in 1941 only 297,000,000 bushels of rice out of an annual consumption of 400,000,000 bushels. *New York Times*, December 2, 1941, p. 6.

<sup>97</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, July 25, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 531.



neutralization of this area. But the Japanese Ambassador feared that withdrawal, with the attendant problem of saving face, would require too great a degree of statesmanship from Japan.<sup>98</sup> Since the Presidential suggestion was not received in Tokyo until after the news of the American order of July 25, freezing Japanese assets, resentment over the American counter-measure made favorable consideration of the proposal impossible.<sup>99</sup> Secretary Hull's statement in regard to the closing of the negotiations so greatly increased the tension that the new Foreign Minister Toyoda, admitting discouragement at the turn of affairs, told Mr. Grew he had hardly slept at all during recent nights. The Ambassador also regarded it as likely that the Foreign Minister reflected the concern of the Emperor.<sup>100</sup>

Colonel Iwakuro, conferring with State Department officials, said that the occupation of French Indo-China had been discussed in Japanese circles for some time, but that "the underlying purpose of the effort to reach an understanding was to set in motion a trend away from southward advance and thus avert the possibility of such a step as had just now been taken." He also suggested that if German successes and moves should threaten the Far East the basis of conversations might be different.<sup>101</sup> Mr. Roosevelt, in conversation with Ambassador Nomura the preceding day, had also suggested that German plans for world conquest would eventually threaten Japan's Far Eastern interests. In reply, the Japanese Ambassador offered an old Chinese proverb in which he had great faith: "He who continuously brandishes the sword eventually kills himself."<sup>102</sup> Apparently this faith was not shared in either Tokyo or Washington.

In a delayed response to the President's proposal of July 24, calling for troop withdrawal and neutralization of Indo-China, Japan made an effort to break through the impasse in the conversations with a new proposition on August 6. Japan was willing to pledge that:

... it will not further station its troops in the Southwestern Pacific areas except French Indo-China and that the Japanese troops now stationed in French Indo-China will be withdrawn forthwith on the settlement of the China incident.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>98</sup>Memorandum by Welles, July 24, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 529.

<sup>99</sup>Memorandum by Grew, July 27, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 534-535. For text of the freezing order, and explanatory memoranda, see *For. Rel.*, II: 267 ff.

<sup>100</sup>Memorandum by Grew, July 26, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 533-534.

<sup>101</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, July 25, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 530-532.

<sup>102</sup>Memorandum by Welles, July 24, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 530.

<sup>103</sup>Text, Nomura to Hull, *For. Rel.*, II: 549.

Guarantees would be given of the neutrality of the Philippines "at an opportune time" on the condition that Japanese citizens would not be discriminated against in the islands. The United States was to suspend its military measures in the Southwestern Pacific, and on the successful conclusion of the conversations to advise Great Britain and the Dutch to take similar steps. Normal trade relations were to be restored by the United States, and both nations were to cooperate in assuring free access to the natural resources of the Southwestern Pacific and Eastern Asia. This draft was so far short of the President's proposal that Secretary Hull was pessimistic over its prospects,<sup>104</sup> and the formal State Department reply said that it was "lacking in responsiveness to the suggestion made by the President . . ."<sup>105</sup>

## V. EFFORTS FOR A PACIFIC CONFERENCE AUGUST - OCTOBER, 1941

In the next phase of these informal negotiations, the hopes of the Japanese representatives were centered upon bringing together the executive heads of the two governments for a personal conference, a suggestion which had been included in the original draft proposal by private American and Japanese individuals but had been laid aside in the following discussions. The pattern of reasoning which ran consistently through these proposals was that the best hope of peace was for the moderate element in Japan to establish itself firmly in control, as against the military extremists, and to cooperate with the United States in shifting Pacific relationships onto a new basis; but that a certain measure of immediate agreement with the United States was a prerequisite to establishing the moderates firmly in control, because it would form a counter-weight on Japanese public opinion, against the pressures of militarist and Axis propaganda. It was urged that an executive conference would enable the heads of government to cut through the usual roundabout diplomatic channels, thus avoiding possibilities of misunderstanding and unfavorable publicity and saving the situation while there was yet time.

The American spokesmen, on the other hand, held that it would be unwise for their government to enter such a conference unless all important points were agreed upon in advance and unless the Japanese negotiators were already sufficiently secure in

<sup>104</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, August 6, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 547.

<sup>105</sup>Hull to Nomura, *For. Rel.*, II: 552-553.



their control of the domestic situation to be able to carry out any commitments that were made. They pointed to past experience as a cause of skepticism on these points, and noted that during the current conversations the Japanese military program continued on its set course, with a lengthening list of complaints of the violation of American rights in areas under Japanese occupation.

On August 10, 1941, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt met at sea for the conversations which resulted in the "Atlantic Charter." On August 8, Mr. Nomura had repeated the request for a similar conference between the heads of the American and Japanese governments at Honolulu, in line with the earlier April 9 proposal.<sup>108</sup> This Japanese request was repeated eight days later, but Mr. Hull remained non-committal.<sup>107</sup>

According to the available information, Japan was one of the principal subjects under discussion at the Atlantic Conference.<sup>108</sup> When he returned to Washington the President called Ambassador Nomura to the White House and read him a strong statement of the American position.<sup>109</sup> After reviewing his proposal of July 24, the President's "Oral Statement" said that complete candor was now necessary, and concluded on a warning note:

... this Government now finds it necessary to say to the Government of Japan that if the Japanese Government takes any further steps in pursuance of a policy or program of military domination by force or threat of force of neighboring countries, the Government of the United States will be compelled to take immediately any and all steps which it may deem necessary toward safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of the United States and American nationals and toward insuring the safety and security of the United States.<sup>110</sup>

The President read a second and separate statement dealing with the Japanese proposal for an executive conference and the

<sup>108</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, August 8, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 550.

<sup>107</sup>Memorandum by Hull, August 16, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 553.

<sup>109</sup>Mr. Churchill "informed the President of the British Government's view that it needed more time to prepare for resistance against any Japanese attack in the Far East. This consideration applied also to the state of our defensive preparations in the Philippine Islands. The President and Mr. Churchill agreed that the American and the British Governments should take parallel action in warning Japan against new moves of aggression. The President and Mr. Churchill agreed also that this Government should be prepared to continue its conversations with the Japanese Government and by such means to offer Japan a reasonable and just alternative to the course upon which Japan was engaged." State Department Memorandum, May 19, 1942, *For. Rel.*, II: 345.

<sup>110</sup>Memorandum by Hull, August 17, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 554-555.

<sup>111</sup>Roosevelt to Nomura, August 17, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 556-557.

resumption of conversations relative to a peaceful settlement of the questions at issue. Stating that the United States Government had shown great patience during the former conversations and that meanwhile it had appeared that the Japanese Government "was adopting courses directly the opposite of those on which the . . . conversations . . . had been predicated," the President declared:

No proposals or suggestions affecting the rights and privileges of either the United States or Japan would be considered except as they might be in conformity with the basic principles to which the United States has long been committed. The program envisaged in such informal discussions would involve the application in the entire Pacific area of the principle of equality of commercial opportunity and treatment. It would thus make possible access by all countries to raw materials and to all other essential commodities.<sup>111</sup>

If such a program were adopted for the Pacific, he said, and thereafter any Pacific country were menaced, the United States would continue to follow the policy of aiding nations resisting aggression. In those cases where monopolies in essential commodities already existed, the United States "would expect to use its influence to see that all countries are given a fair share of the distribution of the products of such monopolies and at a fair price."<sup>112</sup>

If the Japanese Government really desired and felt in a position to suspend its expansionist program, the statement continued, "and to embark upon a peaceful program for the Pacific along the lines of the program and principles to which the United States is committed," the United States Government would be willing to resume the informal discussions.

During the interview in which these statements were read and handed to the Ambassador, the President told him informally that "the next move is now up to Japan." Mr. Nomura responded by presenting again the proposal that Prince Konoye "would be disposed to meet the President midway, geographically speaking . . . and sit down together and talk the matter out in a peaceful spirit."<sup>113</sup>

In Tokyo, Foreign Minister Toyoda was seeking Ambassador Grew's support for the conference proposal and expressed high hopes for the statesmanship of the two executives at the conference

<sup>111</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 558.

<sup>112</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 559.

<sup>113</sup>Memorandum by Hull, August 17, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 554-555.



table. The Minister said also that Japan would not necessarily be limited to the extent of the August 6 reply to the President.<sup>114</sup>

Ambassador Grew personally appealed for "very prayerful consideration" of the proposal "for the sake of avoiding the obviously growing possibility of an utterly futile war between Japan and the United States . . ."

Not only is the proposal unprecedented in Japanese history, but it is an indication that Japanese intransigence is not crystallized completely owing to the fact that the proposal has the approval of the Emperor and the highest authorities in the land. The good which may flow from a meeting between Prince Konoye and President Roosevelt is incalculable.<sup>115</sup>

#### American Reaction to the Suggestion for a Conference

According to a memorandum of August 23, President Roosevelt had reacted to the conference proposal to the point of saying that if such a meeting was to be held, it might be arranged for about October 15, but Nomura stressed the urgency of an earlier date.<sup>116</sup> Prime Minister Konoye sent a personal appeal to the President on August 27 for a meeting "as soon as possible."<sup>117</sup> The latter spoke favorably of the communication, but also raised difficulties in getting away for twenty-one days to go as far as Hawaii.<sup>118</sup> The President then suggested Juneau, Alaska, as an alternative meeting place which would only require some fourteen or fifteen days of his time and allow for a three or four day conversation. This alternative was agreeable to the Japanese Ambassador and he said that the Prime Minister could make the journey there by warship in about ten days. Nomura also suggested the period between September 21 and 25 as the most suitable.<sup>119</sup>

The Secretary of State at the same time continued to press for full preliminary agreements, and looked upon Juneau as merely a ratification meeting.<sup>120</sup> He dwelt upon the serious consequences to both Governments if the meeting failed to reach an agreement, but he did not give equal consideration to the hazards of having no meeting at all. When the question of the Axis Pact was raised

<sup>114</sup>Memorandum by Grew, August 18, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 563.

<sup>115</sup>Grew to Hull, August 18, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 565.

<sup>116</sup>Memorandum by Hull, August 23, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 568.

<sup>117</sup>The Japanese Prime Minister to President Roosevelt, August 27, 1941, presented to the President by Ambassador Nomura on August 28, *For. Rel.*, II: 572-573.

<sup>118</sup>Memorandum by Hull, August 28, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 571. The President's time estimate is unexplained.

<sup>119</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, August 28, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 576.

<sup>120</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 576-577.

again on August 28, Mr. Nomura said that he did not feel that there would be any difficulties about it at the conference since " . . . the Japanese people regarded their adherence to the Axis as merely nominal and . . . he could not conceive of his people being prepared to go to war with the United States for the sake of Germany." But he did think that to ask Japan to give the United States a blank check for any action against Germany "was equivalent to asking for a nullification of the Tripartite Pact."<sup>121</sup> Japan's leaders apparently were unwilling to go that far as long as they considered themselves subject to "Allied encirclement." The Foreign Office considered that the possibility of a news leak of the proposed meeting was risk enough in face of the Alliance, and emphasized the necessity of keeping the preliminary negotiations a secret from the Germans and Italians.<sup>122</sup> When some publicity did come out of Washington, Tokyo said that it not only gave direct advantage to the pro-Axis and extremist elements, but it increased the danger of an attempt on the life of Prince Konoye.<sup>123</sup> Anti-American feeling was intensified by the dispatch of an American military mission to China and of oil supplies to Russia through Far Eastern waters. Consequently even greater urgency was stressed in order to upset the Japanese opposition with a *fait accompli*.

The President's formal reply to the Prime Minister on September 3 showed much less interest in the conference than did his first reaction. While he gave assurances that the government was "prepared to proceed as rapidly as possible toward the consummation of arrangements for a meeting," Mr. Roosevelt said that precaution should be taken to insure success, through preliminary discussions and agreements.<sup>124</sup> At this time he added a new and important qualification: once preliminary agreements had been reached it would be necessary to discuss the matter fully with the British, Chinese and Dutch.<sup>125</sup> This unexpected proviso made an early meeting a practical impossibility as well as reducing the possibility of arranging a conference at all.

#### Japan Attempts to Break the Impasse

On the evening of September 6, Ambassador Grew dined privately with Prince Konoye, and the two engaged in a long

<sup>121</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 577.

<sup>122</sup>Memorandum by Grew, August 18, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 560.

<sup>123</sup>Memorandum by Grew, August 29, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 580.

<sup>124</sup>President Roosevelt's reply to the Japanese Prime Minister, September 3, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 592.

<sup>125</sup>Memorandum by Hull, September 3, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 588.



discussion. In his memorandum of this meeting, the Ambassador states that Konoye and the Japanese Government "... conclusively and wholeheartedly agree with the four principles enumerated by the Secretary of State as a basis for the rehabilitation of relations between the United States and Japan."<sup>126</sup> The Prime Minister accepted the responsibility for the present regrettable state of relations and said that he had the full support of the responsible chiefs of the Army and Navy in his peaceful aims. He also thought that the opposition could be put down and controlled in Japan.

Two efforts to break the deadlock were made through Japanese proposals on September 4 and 6.<sup>127</sup> These were interpreted as proposing to negotiate directly with China for peace and not to ask the good offices of the United States. The State Department was strongly opposed to any such step and insisted that the character of the peace with China was a concern of the United States as well as of Great Britain and the Netherlands.<sup>128</sup> The Japanese said that the notes had been misunderstood and that they still desired the good offices of the United States.<sup>129</sup>

The note of September 6 neither asked the mediation of the American Government in the peace with China nor stated the terms of that peace. However, it began with the statement that the Japanese Government was ready to go forward with all of the proposals on which tentative agreement had been reached in earlier conversations. Only a general pledge was given in regard to troop withdrawal from East Asia, while in the event of American participation in the European war, "the execution of the Tripartite Pact by Japan [would] be independently decided." The United States, according to this proposal, was to suspend its military measures in the Pacific and remove the freezing measure and restrictions on Japanese trade.

On September 4, the United States Destroyer *Greer* fought with a German submarine in the North Atlantic. This action re-emphasized the existence of the Axis Pact as an obstacle to agreement with Japan; but in Tokyo, Ambassador Grew felt that the

<sup>126</sup>Memorandum by Grew, September 6, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 604.

<sup>127</sup>Texts, *For. Rel.*, II: 597-600, 608-609.

<sup>128</sup>Statement handed by Grew to Toyoda, September 10, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 611.

<sup>129</sup>Due to confusion on this point, the note of September 4 was withdrawn by Ambassador Nomura, who apparently had prepared it without authority from the Foreign Office. *For. Rel.*, II: 597, 610, 623.

Pact was becoming unpopular and in explaining the background of the conversations he wrote:

... The Japanese found that Matsuoka (with, of course, the support of Prince Konoye and most of the military people) had led them to back the wrong horse in entering the Tripartite Alliance; the Nazis were, just as I have constantly predicted, overplaying their hand in Japan; and when the United States and Great Britain clamped down with their respective economic sanctions as a result of the Japanese move into southern Indo-China, the Japanese Government began at last to see the handwriting on the wall and to realize not only that they had nothing to gain from the Tripartite Pact, whether Germany should win or lose, but that their own economic system could not stand the strain of Anglo-Dutch-American economic pressure.<sup>130</sup>

Mr. Grew also reported that the Japanese Ambassador to London told him that "... the initiative in the direction of an understanding with America and England had come from the Emperor personally ..."<sup>131</sup> Eugene Dooman, Counselor of the American Embassy in Tokyo, reported that an understanding had been reached among influential elements in Japan which would enable the Prime Minister to give President Roosevelt direct oral assurance of Japan's attitude in regard to the Pact which "would be entirely satisfactory to the President."<sup>132</sup> Mr. Dooman added that American commitment to the principle of the sanctity of treaties would not permit a request to Japan to betray its Axis treaty, but that Japan could inform Germany that it had decided to "pursue policies conformable to those of the United States."

#### Grew Supports the Conference Proposal

As the month of September drew to an end without success in reaching a satisfactory preliminary agreement, Tokyo made another strong plea for a very early meeting. The personnel of the Prime Minister's party had been arranged and the ship put into readiness to sail, while the approach of the storm season along the Alaskan coast increased the urgency of an early date. Plans by pro-Axis forces in Japan to celebrate the anniversary of the Tripartite Pact on September 27 were adding to the Government's difficulties.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>130</sup>*Ten Years in Japan*, 443.

<sup>131</sup>Memorandum by Grew, September 17, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 625. This statement implies that negotiations were also in progress with Great Britain. Release of the correspondence of the British Foreign Office will undoubtedly add much to the story of the American negotiations.

<sup>132</sup>Memorandum by Dooman, September 18, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 628.

<sup>133</sup>Memorandum by Grew, September 27, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 642-645.



Explaining that he believed language difficulties in Washington might be delaying an understanding, Foreign Minister Toyoda had suggested to Ambassador Grew that the conversations be transferred to Tokyo. The Department replied that parallel conversations might be held, but in view of the President's direct concern, they wished the main conversations to continue in Washington.<sup>134</sup>

On September 29, Ambassador Grew sent the Secretary of State the strongest statement in support of the conference in all the published correspondence. He said, in part:

A review of telegraphic correspondence on this subject since last spring reveals the Japanese Government's efforts, increasing steadily and intensified lately, to arrange a meeting between Prince Konoye and President Roosevelt without further delay. . . . when the Konoye-Toyoda regime began last July, American diplomacy obtained a very active new lease of life. The Ambassador expresses his earnest hope therefore that so propitious a period be not permitted to slip by without a new foundation having been laid with enough stability to warrant a reasonable amount of confidence that the structure to be erected gradually and progressively thereon can and will endure.

. . . The Ambassador recalls his reports to the Department to the effect that Japanese foreign policies are inevitably changed by the impact of events abroad and that liberal elements in Japan might come to the top in due course as a result of the trend of events. He considers that such a time has arrived. He sees a good chance of Japan's falling into line if a program can be followed of world reconstruction as forecast by the declaration of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill.<sup>135</sup>

Mr. Grew felt that this program should be one of "constructive conciliation, not so-called appeasement" as opposed to the method of "progressive economic strangulation." He questioned whether it was not now possible for the United States to halt Japan's expansionist program "without war, or an immediate risk of war," and "whether, through failure to use the present opportunity, the United States [would] not face a greatly increased risk of war."<sup>136</sup>

In his journal, Ambassador Grew commented further:

For a Prime Minister of Japan thus to shatter all precedent and tradition in this land of subservience to precedent and tradition, and to wish to come hat in hand, so to speak, to meet the President of the United States on American soil, is a gauge of the

<sup>134</sup>Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, 442.

<sup>135</sup>Grew to Hull, September 29, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 645-646.

<sup>136</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 647-648.

determination of the Government to undo the vast harm already accomplished in alienating our powerful and progressively angry country.

Just now, at the end of September, the conversations have been making little apparent progress and the desired goal is by no means in sight even though the Japanese Government professes to believe that it has already met our desiderata all along the line. It has not done so, simply because the mentality of the Japanese is such that it cannot bring itself to express the commitments, which it claims it is prepared to undertake, in concise, unambiguous language.<sup>137</sup>

Secretary Hull, however, maintained that this failure of Japan to make specific advance commitments was a mark of insincerity and an effort to find loopholes in loose terminology which would sanction continued aggressive actions. In Japan, on the other hand, doubt was expressed whether the United States ever intended to come to an agreement.<sup>138</sup>

Foreign Minister Toyoda finally suggested a specific date for the Pacific meeting, October 10-15,<sup>139</sup> but the State Department's reply to this suggestion on October 2 carried in it a strong note of finality. The principles set forth by Secretary Hull on April 16 were again reviewed and willingness expressed to go on with the negotiations on that basis. However, the note continued, the September 6 proposal of Japan disclosed such divergences in the concepts of the two governments that the American Government did not feel that under the circumstances an executive meeting would be likely to contribute to peace. Broad assurances, given by the Prime Minister and others, of agreement with the principles laid down by the American Government had been qualified and narrowed down by unnecessary and obscure phrases. The American Government was also dissatisfied with the prospect of any Japanese troops remaining in either China or Indo-China.<sup>140</sup>

At this point negotiations again stopped and pessimism was expressed on both sides. While the American Government complained that the Japanese did not present specific terms in accord-

<sup>137</sup>*Ten Years in Japan*, 444.

<sup>138</sup>Memorandum by Dooman, October 7, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 662. For Hull's comments see State Department Memorandum of May 19, 1942, *For. Rel.*, II: 352. Any effort to evaluate these conflicting beliefs not only requires access to the Japanese archives, but involves the difficult question of motivations and will doubtless be a controversial aspect of any discussion of the negotiations for many years.

<sup>139</sup>Document handed by Nomura to the Secretary of State, September 29, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 654.

<sup>140</sup>Hull to Nomura, *For. Rel.*, II: 656-661.



ance with American principles, the Japanese replied that the American Government had not stated precisely what it wanted the Japanese to undertake.<sup>141</sup> In referring to the difficulties of dealing in principles alone, Ambassador Nomura humorously referred to his experience at the Versailles conference where the Fourteen Points of President Wilson led to discussions lasting half a year.<sup>142</sup>

On October 10, Ambassador Grew was approached on the subject of making arrangements for the dispatch of a high ranking Japanese diplomat to Washington to assist Nomura in the conversations.<sup>143</sup> But before these plans could be made, the Konoye cabinet had resigned on October 16—according to Ambassador Grew, as a result of the failure in the negotiations.<sup>144</sup> An extremist cabinet was feared, but the Ambassador learned that the Emperor had taken an unprecedented action and had called both civil and military leaders to a conference where he ordered the armed forces to pursue a policy which would guarantee against a war with the United States.<sup>145</sup> On this basis, General Tojo selected a new cabinet with strong army-navy membership. Because of the General's active rank, it was thought that he would be in a better position to control the extremist elements among the military.<sup>146</sup>

## VI. KURUSU'S UNSUCCESSFUL MISSION NOVEMBER 5 to DECEMBER 7

By November the economic war against Japan had reached as crucial a point as had the diplomatic negotiations. The United States action freezing Japanese assets in July had been followed by similar action on the part of the British and Dutch, and Japan likewise had frozen the assets of all three countries in Japanese territory, so that trade between these countries and Japan had virtually ceased. Combined with the closing of the Panama Canal to Japanese ships and the effects on trade of the Russo-German war, the economic blockade had cut off about seventy-five per cent of Japan's normal imports, thus causing a serious food deficiency, and had greatly weakened the national economy as a whole.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>141</sup>Memorandum by Dooman, October 7, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 662.

<sup>142</sup>Memorandum by Schmidt, October 9, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 676.

<sup>143</sup>Memorandum by Grew, October 10, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 679.

<sup>144</sup>*Ten Years in Japan*, 456.

<sup>145</sup>Memorandum by Grew, October 25, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 697.

<sup>146</sup>*Ten Years in Japan*, 460. It should be noted, however, that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was placed in the hands of a civilian, Mr. Shigenori Togo.

<sup>147</sup>Paul V. Horn, "Effects of Allied Economic Blockade on Japan," *The Conference Board Economic Record*, III: 22 (November 25, 1941), 509-512.

Mr. Saburo Kurusu left Tokyo for Washington on November 5, to assist Ambassador Nomura. The new cabinet, without waiting for his arrival there, made an effort to continue the negotiations. On November 7, Nomura presented to Secretary Hull a document dealing with the disposition of Japanese forces in East Asia which pledged troop withdrawal from China within two years from the conclusion of peace, with an exception in respect to garrisons in North China and Inner Mongolia. A pledge was given to respect territorial sovereignty of French Indo-China and to withdraw the troops there at the conclusion of the Chinese war. Further, the principle of non-discrimination in economic affairs would be applied to all Pacific areas on the understanding that it was "to be applied uniformly to the rest of the entire world as well."<sup>148</sup> Except for the time element, this proposal was strikingly similar to that of Secretary Hull on November 26, 1945, referred to below.

On November 10, Mr. Nomura called on the President and summarized the recent Japanese proposals. He read the Japanese statement in regard to independent decision on the interpretation of the Axis Pact if the United States should participate in the European war, and then added significantly, "All I have to ask you is to 'read between the lines' and to accept the formula as satisfactory."<sup>149</sup> After making this statement, Mr. Nomura asked that it be deleted from the report, but its implications were clear. The Ambassador also indicated a major difficulty in the negotiations by saying, "You will agree with me that where there is no mutual confidence and trust, a thousand words or letters would not be a satisfactory assurance."<sup>150</sup>

To the continued Japanese plea for more speed in the negotiations, Mr. Roosevelt replied that the six months already consumed in discussions was but a short time to deal with such important problems, and he counseled patience.<sup>151</sup> Foreign Minister Togo was "shocked" on hearing from Washington that the State Department and the President did not grasp the urgency of the negotiations, and the necessity for bringing them to an early successful conclusion. Domestic opposition to the negotiations was apparently strong, and Togo realized that his position and even his life were at stake as a result of his opposing the extremist groups and carrying on the negotiations.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>148</sup>Text, Nomura to Hull, *For. Rel.*, II: 709-710.

<sup>149</sup>Memorandum by Hull, November 10, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 716.

<sup>150</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 716.

<sup>151</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 718.

<sup>152</sup>Memorandum by Grew, November 12, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 720.



The Japanese Government suggested that it was now time to recognize the discussions as "negotiations."<sup>153</sup> However, on November 15, Secretary Hull replied that he could not enter the stage of negotiations until Great Britain, China and the Netherlands had been consulted, but that, on the other hand, he could not go to them with any proposals until the United States and Japan "had got things on a satisfactory basis" as between themselves. He objected to receiving "ultimatums" on the question of speed in the discussions on the ground that the United States had been pursuing a peaceful course all the while and the Japanese Government was the one which had been "violating law and order." Asking if the Alliance with Germany would be automatically abandoned by Japan on conclusion of an agreement with the United States, Hull said that any agreement reached with Japan while an obligation to Germany remained in force would cause so much turmoil in the United States that "he might well be lynched."<sup>154</sup>

This insistence on automatic disavowal was a much stronger position than the one the State Department had taken hitherto. The previous Japanese statements of the defensive nature of the Axis Pact as well as the pledges of independent interpretation in the event of American entry into the war had come close to meeting American desires, as expressed in June, but this mid-November conference foreshadowed the end of the discussions.

At this time Secretary Hull brought forward a draft of a proposed new commercial agreement designed to form part of the general agreement which was being sought. This proposal was along the lines of cooperation by the United States and Japan in securing the reduction of trade barriers in all countries, while restoring normal trade between themselves, save as each might find it necessary to restrict exports for its own security and self defense.<sup>155</sup> Japan would restore to China complete control over its economic affairs, and both countries would agree not to seek special privileges there but to encourage China, and other Pacific countries wherever feasible, to undertake comprehensive programs of economic development, with Japan and the United States parti-

<sup>153</sup>Memoranda by Grew, November 10 and 12, 1942, *For. Rel.*, II: 710-721.

<sup>154</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, November 15, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 731-734.

<sup>155</sup>In view of the fact that the original American embargo orders against Japan had not mentioned that country by name, but had generally prohibited exports of certain products, except to the Western Hemisphere and Great Britain, in the interest of "self-defense," the use of that phrase as a saving clause here might well have raised a question concerning the sincerity of this offer.

cipating in such development and trade on equal terms with any third country.<sup>156</sup>

#### Mr. Kurusu in Washington

Meanwhile Japan's special envoy, Mr. Kurusu, made a dramatic flight to Washington, where he was received by the President on November 17, together with Ambassador Nomura. All the way across the Pacific, Kurusu said, it was like a powder keg and some way must be found to adjust the situation. When he attempted to explain away the Tripartite Pact, Mr. Hull again said that failure to insist on Japan's disavowal of the Pact before coming to an agreement with her would cause the President and himself to be denounced in immeasurable terms. The Secretary felt that Kurusu had nothing new to offer, and so the first conference ended with no advance.<sup>157</sup> The same day Ambassador Grew warned Washington to be on guard against a surprise Japanese military or naval move.<sup>158</sup>

The Secretary and the two ambassadors conferred again the following day, as for several days thereafter. A threatening note entered this conversation when Mr. Hull said that "we can go so far but rather than go beyond a certain point it would be better for us to stand and take the consequences."<sup>159</sup> Hull was apparently willing to accept nothing less than an open break with the Axis. Kurusu said that while he could not promise that, Japan might do something that would "outshine" the Pact. When the Japanese Ambassador asked for a State Department formula by which Japan could deal with her Axis obligations, Mr. Hull replied that "this was a matter for Japan to work out."<sup>160</sup>

The Secretary also emphasized that differences over the extent and timing of Japanese troop removal from China, and over Japan's commercial policy there, were further barriers to agreement. Mr. Kurusu, in turn, pointed out that the American position which required Japan to meet British and Chinese interests on these two points, put American-Japanese relations at the mercy of these powers.<sup>161</sup> Admiral Nomura, speaking for some intermediate step to provide a better situation for changing Japan's course, "pointed out that big ships cannot turn around too quickly, that they have to be eased around slowly and gradually."<sup>162</sup>

<sup>156</sup>Text, *For. Rel.*, II: 736-737.

<sup>157</sup>Memorandum by Hull, November 17, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 740-743.

<sup>158</sup>Grew to Hull, November 17, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 743.

<sup>159</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, November 18, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 745.

<sup>160</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 746.

<sup>161</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 748.

<sup>162</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 747.



Toward the end of this interview, the Secretary touched upon the possibility of arranging some relaxation of the freezing order and embargo, and said he would consult the other governments concerned. Ambassador Nomura suggested that the Japanese Government might be willing to return to the status preceding the July moves by withdrawing its troops from southern Indo-China.<sup>163</sup> Accordingly, on November 20, a proposal was presented in regard to Southeastern Asia and the Southern Pacific, in which Japan pledged immediate withdrawal of troops from southern to northern French Indo-China, and from all those areas at the conclusion of the peace with China or at the establishment of peace in the Pacific. In return the United States was to restore commercial relations, supply Japan with a certain quantity of oil and refrain from measures prejudicial to the restoration of peace in China.<sup>164</sup> This last clause apparently meant suspension of American aid to Chiang Kai-shek, but the Secretary said that the purpose of our aid to China was the same as that of our aid to Britain—implying an "all-out" American support of Chinese victory, regardless of its effect upon relations with Japan.<sup>165</sup>

The next day Japan also offered a new draft on its Axis obligations. Japan undertook to interpret the Pact "freely and independently," declaring it contained no obligation on Japan to become a cooperator in any aggression of a third power. Further, it declared that the Japanese Government "would never project the people of Japan into war at the behest of any foreign Power; it [would] accept warfare only as the ultimate, inescapable necessity for the maintenance of its security and the preservation of national life against active injustice."<sup>166</sup> This was the furthest point made by Japan in disavowing the war threat of the Pact, but Mr. Hull said that he "did not think this would be of any particular help and so dismissed it."<sup>167</sup>

The Japanese proposal of November 20 had been put forth as a *modus vivendi*, to serve until some further agreement could be established. While awaiting an official reply from the United States the ambassadors on November 22 had another talk with the Secretary of State, ranging over many aspects of their problem.

<sup>163</sup>For. Rel., II: 749-750.

<sup>164</sup>Text, Nomura to Hull, November 20, 1941, For. Rel., II: 755-756.

<sup>165</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, November 20, 1941, For. Rel., II: 754.

<sup>166</sup>Kurusu to Hull, November 20, 1941 (Delivered November 21), For. Rel., II: 756-757.

<sup>167</sup>Memorandum by Hull, November 21, 1941, For. Rel., II: 756.

Mr. Hull said that he had found other governments receptive to the idea of relaxing the freezing of Japanese assets if the Japanese could give satisfactory evidence of peaceful intent, but that they were inclined to move gradually. While expressing discouragement over the outlook for agreement, he observed that "militarism was sapping everybody and that if the world were to be plunged into another war there would not be much left of the people anywhere."<sup>168</sup> The Secretary further complained of the tone of the Japanese press and asked why no Japanese statesmen were preaching peace. He objected to the proposal that the United States discontinue aid to China and, whereas, a few days earlier he had appeared to regard favorably the suggestion of Japanese troop withdrawal from southern Indo-China,<sup>169</sup> he now insisted that Japanese troops be withdrawn from all of Indo-China rather than from the South alone.<sup>170</sup>

On November 24, Ambassador Grew reported from Tokyo that the Japanese Foreign Minister expressed perplexity as to the reasons of the United States Government for not accepting the Japanese proposal. Questioned by Grew, he said that he did not expect aid to China to be discontinued until such time as negotiations between China and Japan were to begin, at which time he assumed hostilities would have ceased. Grew concluded, therefore, that this point in the proposal had been largely "to save face."<sup>171</sup>

### The Proposal of November 26

The comprehensive counter-proposal submitted by the United States on November 26 marked the climax of nine months of discussion. It has been variously interpreted. Ambassador Grew, who called it broad-gauge and statesmanlike, offering Japan a remarkable opportunity, found that public opinion in Japan viewed it as an "ultimatum."<sup>172</sup> Secretary Hull characterized it as "an

<sup>168</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, November 22, 1941, For. Rel., II: 757-760.

<sup>169</sup>According to a memorandum of November 19, "The Secretary expressed the view that this might enable the leaders in Japan to hold their ground and organize public opinion in favor of a peaceful course. He said that he recognized that this might take some time." For. Rel., II: 751.

<sup>170</sup>On October 25, Ambassador Grew, in a memorandum to the State Department, had written: "The belief is current among Japanese leaders that the principal difficulty in the way of an understanding with the United States is the question of the removal of Japanese armed forces from China and Indochina, but these same leaders are confident that, provided Japan is not placed in an impossible position by the insistence on the part of the United States that all Japanese troops in these areas be withdrawn at once, such a removal can and will be successfully effected." For. Rel., II: 698.

<sup>171</sup>Memorandum by Grew, November 24, 1941, For. Rel., II: 762-764.

<sup>172</sup>Ten Years in Japan, 483-486.



effort to bridge the gap between our draft of June 21, 1941 and the Japanese draft of September 25 by making a new approach to the essential problems underlying a comprehensive Pacific settlement."<sup>173</sup> The need for this new approach arose, he said, from the state of public opinion, which was confused and apprehensive. "It was therefore necessary to draw up a document which would present a complete picture of our position by making provision for each essential point involved."<sup>174</sup>

The American proposal of November 26 opened with the declaration of four fundamental principles, substantially the same as those laid down by Secretary Hull at the beginning of conversations in April. The first three—inviolability of territorial integrity and sovereignty of all nations, non-interference in internal affairs of other countries, and the principle of equality, including equality of commercial opportunity, were stated in almost identical words, but the fourth had been rephrased from "non-disturbance of the *status quo* in the Pacific" by other than peaceful means to "reliance upon international cooperation and conciliation for the prevention and pacific settlement of controversies and for improvement of international conditions by peaceful methods and processes." Next, five principles were laid down as guides to commercial policies of the two countries:

- (1) non-discrimination in commercial relations;
- (2) "international economic cooperation and abolition of extreme nationalism as expressed in excessive trade restrictions;"
- (3) non-discriminatory access to raw materials;
- (4) protection of the interests of consuming populations in the operation of international commodity agreements;
- (5) arrangements in international finance calculated to aid essential enterprises and continuous development of all countries and trade processes in harmony with their common welfare.<sup>175</sup>

Section II of the proposed draft, calling for ten steps to be taken by one or both governments, merits close study.

1. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will endeavor to conclude a multilateral non-aggression pact among the British Empire, China, Japan, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Thailand and the United States.

<sup>173</sup>Hull to Nomura, November 26, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 767.

<sup>174</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, November 26, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 765.

<sup>175</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 768-769.

2. Both Governments will endeavor to conclude among the American, British, Chinese, Japanese, the Netherland and Thai Governments an agreement whereunder each of the Governments would pledge itself to respect the territorial integrity of French Indochina and, in the event that there should develop a threat to the territorial integrity of Indochina, to enter into immediate consultation with a view to taking such measures as may be deemed necessary and advisable to meet the threat in question. Such agreement would provide also that each of the Governments party to the agreement would not seek or accept preferential treatment in its trade or economic relations with Indochina and would use its influence to obtain for each of the signatories equality of treatment in trade and commerce with French Indochina.
3. *The Government of Japan will withdraw all military, naval, air and police forces from China and from Indochina.*
4. *The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will not support—militarily, politically, economically—any government or regime in China other than the National Government of the Republic of China with capital temporarily at Chungking.*
5. Both Governments will give up all extraterritorial rights in China, including rights and interests in and with regard to international settlements and concessions, and rights under the Boxer Protocol of 1901.  
Both Governments will endeavor to obtain the agreement of the British and other governments to give up extraterritorial rights in China, including rights in international settlements and in concessions and under the Boxer Protocol of 1901.
6. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will enter into negotiations for the conclusion between the United States and Japan of a trade agreement, based upon reciprocal most-favored-nation treatment and reduction of trade barriers by both countries, including an undertaking by the United States to bind raw silk on the free list.
7. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will, respectively, remove the freezing restrictions on Japanese funds in the United States and on American funds in Japan.
8. Both Governments will agree upon a plan for the stabilization of the dollar-yen rate, with the allocation of funds adequate for this purpose, half to be supplied by Japan and half by the United States.
9. Both Governments will agree that no agreement which either has concluded with any third power or powers shall be interpreted by it in such a way as to conflict with the fundamental



purpose of this agreement, the establishment and preservation of peace throughout the Pacific area.

10. Both Governments will use their influence to cause other governments to adhere to and to give practical application to the basic political and economic principles set forth in this agreement.<sup>176</sup>

Of these ten steps it will be noted that six called for "endeavors," or "negotiations" or the use of "influence" toward securing certain declared ends, while four called for definite action. Japan was to withdraw *all* forces in China and Indo-China, including its police forces, and to join with the United States in giving up all Chinese extraterritorial rights and concessions, and in supporting the Chungking regime. The United States was to remove the freezing restrictions, with reciprocal action by Japan. Though the Axis Pact was not mentioned by name, step 9 represented a Japanese commitment to nullify it in practice.

Coming on top of the American qualifications of November 15, the proposal of the 26th made it clear that the State Department had reached the end of the negotiations. The fact that the Department did not expect acceptance of its terms had been indicated by Secretary Hull at a meeting of the War Council on the preceding day.<sup>177</sup> Mr. Kurusu said that his government would be likely "to throw up its hands" when this document was transmitted to them, and preferred to defer its transmission until there could be further informal discussion. But the Secretary said that it was as far as the United States would go at this time. Nomura asked if there were no other possibility and whether they could not see the President. Kurusu, interpreting the American reply as meaning the end of the negotiations, asked if there were no interest in a *modus vivendi*, but Mr. Hull said that the matter already had been explored and there the conversation closed.<sup>178</sup>

A charge suggested several times by the Department, to the effect that Japan was conspiring with European aggressors to dominate the world by force,<sup>179</sup> was emphasized by President Roosevelt in his final interview with the ambassadors on November 27. After expressing appreciation of the peace element in Japan, dis-

<sup>176</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 769-770. (Italics ours.)

<sup>177</sup>State Department Memorandum, May 19, 1942, *For. Rel.*, II: 377.

<sup>178</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, November 26, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 765-766.

<sup>179</sup>See for example, memoranda of the conversations of July 24, November 17, November 30, *For. Rel.*, II: 527, 742, 754-755.

appointment at the failure to reach agreement, and hope that the situation might still be saved, the President said that

The temper of public opinion in this country has become of such a character and the big issues at stake in the world today have become so sharply outlined that this country cannot bring about any substantial relaxation in its economic restrictions unless Japan gives this country some clear manifestation of peaceful intent. If that occurs, we can also take some steps of a concrete character designed to improve the general situation.

We remain convinced that Japan's own best interests will not be served by following Hitlerism and courses of aggression, and that Japan's own best interests lie along the courses which we have outlined in the current conversations. If, however, Japan should unfortunately decide to follow Hitlerism and courses of aggression, we are convinced beyond any shadow of doubt that Japan will be the ultimate loser.<sup>180</sup>

Alluding to Japan's charge of encirclement, he declared that the United States could equally maintain that the Philippines were being encircled by Japan.<sup>181</sup>

### War

War seemed now but a matter of time. On November 28, Secretary Hull again told the Army and Navy heads that there was "practically no possibility of an agreement being achieved with Japan," and that a surprise attack might be momentarily expected.<sup>182</sup> On December 1, Mr. Hull told the Japanese representatives, "We will not allow ourselves to be kicked out of the Pacific," and he severely criticized Japan's attitude and conduct during the discussions.<sup>183</sup>

On December 2, the State Department expressed concern over reports of continued Japanese troop movements into Indo-China. Mr. Welles complained of other Japanese military activity in view of the fact that the United States had no aggressive intention against Japan. In his reply, Mr. Nomura said that

The Japanese people believe that economic measures are a much more effective weapon of war than military measures; . . . they believe they are being placed under severe pressure by the United States to yield to the American position; and that it is preferable to fight rather than to yield to pressure.<sup>184</sup>

The Japanese Ambassador further pointed out that since war would not settle the problem, it was better under the circumstances to

<sup>180</sup>Memorandum by Hull, November 27, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 771. (Italics ours.)

<sup>181</sup>*For. Rel.*, II: 772.

<sup>182</sup>See note 177 above.

<sup>183</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, December 1, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 775-776.

<sup>184</sup>Memorandum by Ballantine, December 5, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 780.



reach some agreement rather than no agreement at all. But Mr. Welles said that the proffered American agreement would more certainly bring peace to Japan and satisfy its economic needs than any alternate course.

On December 6, when the door to peace had already been closed, President Roosevelt made a last-minute appeal to the Japanese Emperor. The President asked for withdrawal of Japanese troops from Indo-China in return for a guarantee that there would be no American invasion of that area, and a promise to ask for similar guarantees from the governments of the East Indies, Malaya, Thailand, and China.<sup>185</sup> The President's wire was delayed at the telegraph office in Japan and not delivered to Mr. Grew for more than ten hours.<sup>186</sup> The American Ambassador turned it over to the Foreign Minister after midnight on the morning of December 8, Tokyo time, and it was received by the Emperor at 3:00 A. M., twenty minutes before the attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>187</sup>

One hour after the war broke out, the two Japanese Ambassadors in Washington handed Mr. Hull the document which definitely closed the negotiations.<sup>188</sup> It summarized the course of the conversations, stressing Japanese initiative and charging malevolent aid to the Chungking regime in China, as well as Allied military preparations which completed the encirclement of Japan. The State Department's November 26 draft was said to have ignored Japan's sacrifices in the course of the four years of war in China, and the American Government was accused of holding fast to theories in disregard of realities, refusing to yield an inch on its impractical principles. The Japanese also considered it inconsistent of the United States to object to the settlement of international issues through military pressure while at the same time it used economic pressure for the attainment of the same ends. This economic policy was condemned as being at times more inhumane than military pressure. The statement denounced the joint efforts of Great Britain and the United States to maintain their privileges and concessions in China against Japan. The note concluded:

The Japanese Government regrets to have to notify hereby the American Government that in view of the attitude of the Ameri-

<sup>185</sup> President Roosevelt to Emperor Hirohito, December 6, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 784-786.

<sup>186</sup> *Ten Years in Japan*, 487.

<sup>187</sup> *Ten Years in Japan*, 493.

<sup>188</sup> Memorandum handed by Nomura to Hull, December 7, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 787-792.

can Government it cannot but consider that it is impossible to reach an agreement through further negotiations.<sup>189</sup>

The Secretary of State in his reply said that he had never seen a document "more crowded with infamous falsehoods and distortions."<sup>190</sup> By this time ships were sinking and men dying in the Pacific, and the economic and diplomatic conflict of many months had moved into the military stage.

Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hull issued statements charging the Japanese Government with grave deceit, in view of the fact that the attack at Pearl Harbor and following actions were obviously long planned.<sup>191</sup> But Ambassador Grew concluded that the Japanese Foreign Office at least had no prior knowledge of the military decision<sup>192</sup> which on December 7 actually began the long-predicted war in the Pacific.

## VII. CONCLUSION

When the waves of emotionalism have subsided, it will probably be said of the Pacific conflict, as it has been said of the First World War, that no government actually wanted the war. The people and government of Japan were weary of the long years of costly combat in China and were neither anxious to continue that war nor to fight a new opponent. The people and government of the United States, in turn, had long given voice to their antipathy to new military conflict and expressed their desires for a lasting peace. Yet both governments maintained positions which made the war inevitable as long as neither side would agree to make concessions.

The Japanese Government, and particularly the military extremists, were determined that the struggle against Chiang Kai-shek should not end without material compensations in the form of economic privileges in China and a strengthened military position in northern China. To secure these gains the imperialists were willing deliberately to violate treaties and pledges, and even to risk war with the United States.

Disruptive and tragic for world peace as this Japanese program proved to be, it is nevertheless understandable. To a large extent it was a compensation for national feelings of inferiority and insecurity, both economic and psychological. A large popula-

<sup>189</sup> *For. Rel.*, II: 792.

<sup>190</sup> Memorandum by Ballantine, December 7, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 787.

<sup>191</sup> Statement by the Secretary of State, December 7, 1941, and Message by President Roosevelt to Congress, December 8, 1941, *For. Rel.*, II: 793-794.

<sup>192</sup> *Ten Years in Japan*, 498.



tion with a high rate of increase in a land of scanty resources led to the search for exploitable foreign markets and raw materials. The proximity of China made its lands and peoples the natural source for both. Japan also derived strong psychological satisfaction from the idea of an Asiatic empire which would expel the white man, after decades in which Japanese national pride suffered under the stigma of racial inferiority. These two compensations combined to give the expansionist program enough popular and governmental support so that it could not be easily arrested and diverted into peaceful channels.

On the other hand, the United States Government had long taken a stand for the preservation of the territorial and political integrity of China. American diplomatic opposition to Japan as the principal threat to this integrity was almost continuous from 1931 on. The State Department expressed this opposition through protests and occasional weak threats. Through these same years, American discrimination against Japanese nationals and their descendants in the West Coast States added affronts to Japan's pride. Beginning in 1938, the United States began to implement its diplomatic protests with economic measures. This program reached its logical conclusion in 1941 when the cooperation of Great Britain and the Netherlands enabled the United States to make Japan's economic isolation virtually complete. It was hoped that these pressures would force Japan into complete withdrawal from Asia, and possibly into an actual, if not public, abrogation of the Axis Pact. That this economic war could result in anything but a military conflict was extremely doubtful. In view of the Japanese opposition, the State Department's final proposal of November 26, 1941, had practically no chance of acceptance.

It may be noted that in the final months each government appeared to disregard the views of its ambassador in the other country. Admiral Nomura seems to have been personally distressed by the July Indo-China move. Later, the actions of his government in seeking to transfer the conversations to Tokyo and in sending Kurusu to Washington indicated a certain lack of confidence. The American authorities, on their part, showed no evidence of taking seriously the opinions of Mr. Grew on the value of a Pacific conference, on the dangers of economic sanctions, on the disutility of insisting on abstract principles, or on the possibility of obtaining a genuine about-face in Japanese policy by strengthening the hands of the moderate leaders in the autumn of 1941,

allowing them to save face and to proceed gradually in making the required concessions to United States policy.

It is clear that before December 7, 1941, the insistence of the United States that Japan immediately withdraw her troops from China, and the unwillingness of the Japanese to do so had brought the two countries to the brink of war, and that it was merely a matter of time before one of them should strike the blow that would open the conflict. Under these circumstances it is difficult to regard Pearl Harbor as a totally unprovoked or unexpected "stab in the back." It should have been expected by anyone who knew as much concerning the negotiations in Washington as we know now, and was in fact anticipated by Ambassador Grew.<sup>193</sup>

The alternatives to adhering to a diplomatic program which almost inevitably meant war were only dimly seen and partially explored by the United States. Undoubtedly an intelligent program of conciliation could not have averted war and achieved a settlement fair to all parties involved without considerable cost and possibly years of effort. Extending over decades the cumulative differences which led to the outbreak of war could not easily be counterbalanced by a few gestures, magnanimous though they might have been. But the problems of the relationships of the people and government of Japan with the peoples and governments of China and the United States can ultimately be solved only by negotiation. And no matter what the cost of such peaceful settlement before the outbreak of war might have been, it could scarcely have equalled the expenditure in blood and money of the subsequent military conflict. Nor, in all probability, would any temporary economic or political disadvantages to China from compromise with Japan have left the people as impoverished and exhausted, or have impeded national social and economic progress as much as has the continuation of the war.

The projected Pacific conference, by meeting Japan half-way geographically and diplomatically, might have been one step in this program of conciliation. No new risks were involved, and in the opinion of Ambassador Grew the conference had possibilities as an initial move towards the reversal of both Japanese expansionist policy and the trend of both nations toward war. The

<sup>193</sup>John T. Flynn, in *The Truth About Pearl Harbor*, a pamphlet published by its author (New York, 1944), makes an even stronger case, using a wide variety of sources, for the view that the Pearl Harbor attack should have been anticipated by the chief authorities in Washington—who clearly did expect a Japanese military move in some part of the Pacific.



Washington negotiations also had these possibilities if the State Department had been ready for compromise.

"It is not appeasement that I now advocate," said Joseph Grew, "but constructive conciliation." A compromise with Japan on the Chinese issue *could* have been appeasement in the Munich sense of an expedient stop-gap measure and no more. But constructive conciliation would have implied beginning with the immediate inauguration of a program to erase the basic causes of tension and conflict in the Pacific. American leadership in a program of conciliation might well have been this nation's great historic contribution to internationalism. Since it failed to explore fully the peaceful alternatives to an uncompromising stand, the American Government must bear a due share of the responsibility for the War of the Pacific.

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